

DOUBLE ISSUE LAMONT WINS!

The Nation.

WHITE HEAT

WHAT'S
FUELING
THE NEW
NATIVISM?

BOB MOSER
SUSY BUCHANAN
& DAVID HOLTHOUSE
DAPHNE EVIATAR
DANIEL TICHENOR

Minuteman Chris Simcox

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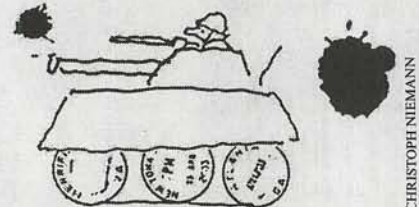
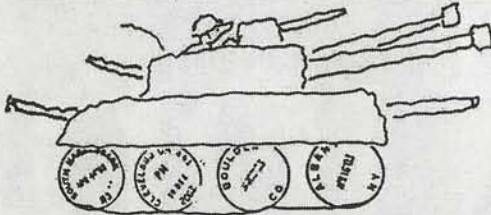
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CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

DEATH PENALTY: LEGALIZED LYNCHING?

New York City

■ Ira Glasser, in "Drug Busts = Jim Crow" [July 10], is right to see the drug war as rooted in a legacy of legalized racial discrimination; however, it is not unique in this regard. Just as the current drug war can be traced to Jim Crow, so is the modern system of capital punishment—thirty years old this year—a direct descendant of lynching.

The same post-Reconstruction era that saw mass social disenfranchisement of blacks also saw thousands murdered by lynch mobs. The decline of lynching in the early 1900s coincided with a rise in state executions, along starkly racist lines. (In Virginia, for example, between 1908 and 1930, blacks represented all but seventeen of the 148 people killed in the electric chair.) Today, minorities are still the majority on death row: Of the 3,370 people awaiting execution, 42 percent are black, 10 percent are Latino—and 80 percent were convicted of crimes where the victim was white.

As Glasser points out, the drug war strips African-Americans of their humanity by "removing them from civil society and then denying them the right to vote while using their bodies to enhance white political power." The death penalty, long favored by politicians running for office, represents the most violent fulfillment of this logic.

LILIANA SEGURA

The Campaign to End the Death Penalty

WHY OH WHY, OHIO?

Philadelphia

■ I was glad to see Andrew Gumbel's "The Coming Ballot Meltdown" [July 17/24]. It's about time the media unearthed the truth about our voting system: It has become one more victim of the corrupt Administration in power. I am watching democracy going down the drain little by little. Without the power of our votes, we the people are sheep in the grip of wolves.

CLARE MAHER

Lucas County, Ohio

■ I was one of more than 900 people in Lucas County whose right to vote was contested in 2004. Six days before the election I received an official form from the County Election Board stating that a person I had never met, who lived miles away in a different town, was contesting my right to vote. Most of the contested voters had downtown addresses—more likely to be Democratic and minority. All 900 challenges were made, I understand, by six members of the Lucas County Republican Party—of which Bernadette Noe was then president as well as being president of the Lucas County Board of

Elections (conflict of interest, anyone?). The court threw out the challenges on a technicality three days before the election. But I wonder how many people were intimidated into giving up their right to vote.

ALICE A. FRYE

Cleveland

■ There is little I disagree with in Andrew Gumbel's excellent article. What is troublesome, however, is that one might conclude that the Ohio electoral system is so dominated by antidemocratic elements that there is no point struggling to reform it. If you ask whether the majority of Ohio voters are aware of the problems, angry about them, willing to act and organized, the answer would be no. But if you ask if it is possible for people to see what is wrong and to find ways to protect the vote and fix the system, I think the answer can be yes. I have helped lead a grass-roots electoral movement in the greater Cleveland area since 2003 and can attest to the large number of people who get involved if they believe they can make a difference.

JUDY GALLO

Mansfield, Ohio

■ Andrew Gumbel says that the argument that Kerry was robbed of the vote in Ohio is "almost certainly a stretch." I urge him to read Steven F. Freeman and Joel Bleifuss's *Was the 2004 Presidential Election Stolen?* The short answer is, yes.

PHILLIP CAVAS

Escondido, Calif.

■ Be thankful for voter fraud. Otherwise, we have to accept the odious conclusion that the American people voted into office a man who can barely read a teleprompter. If the American people did this to themselves, our democracy is on a downward trajectory. The only ray of hope is that voter fraud, not human judgment, produced this travesty.

DENNIS M. CLAUSEN

San Francisco

■ Andrew Gumbel is dead wrong when he asserts there is no firm evidence that the GOP stole the 2004 presidential election in Ohio. Gumbel states, "Bush's official margin of victory of 120,000-odd votes is just too big to be explained away with any confidence."

Gumbel simply didn't do the reporting. But others, including myself, Bob Fitakis and Harvey Wasserman, have, and in our upcoming New Press book, *What Happened in Ohio: A Documentary Record of Theft and Fraud in the 2004 Election*, we show how, conservatively, 150,000 votes were taken from Kerry.

We include nearly 150 documents and analyses to show exactly how Republicans purged 200,000 likely Democratic voters, disenfranchised additional tens of thousands of these same voters on election day, did not

count nearly 100,000 "machine rejected" ballots, disqualified tens of thousands more votes and, yes, did much of this under direct orders from a partisan Republican secretary of state, J. Kenneth Blackwell. We also show how Republicans added nearly 50,000 fraudulent votes to Bush's totals in rural GOP strongholds, using tactics ranging from old-fashioned ballot-box stuffing to computer fraud.

We have been investigating this election since November 2004. We initially used the discovery process in an election challenge lawsuit—where evidence standards are higher than in the media—and are the first people to look at the actual ballots from these Republican districts where vote-count fraud occurred, where if the certified results are true, you find anomalies like the 10,000-plus people who voted for gay marriage and to re-elect Bush, or the final hundreds of paper ballots cast in multiple precincts all voting for Bush—without a single vote for Kerry.

This is the evidence that Gumbel's reporting did not reach, but that he dismisses. *The Nation* does not have to jump on the bandwagon trashing those who have investigated the 2004 Ohio election. The *Rolling Stone* article by R.F.K. Jr. was prompted by our work, which, unlike *Rolling Stone*, blames the Democrats as much as the Republicans for not protecting their party members' voting rights and insisting all votes be counted. Unless that lesson is learned, we can look forward to more elections like 2004 in Ohio: where activists are sent in at the last minute to help while the GOP has spent months targeting every aspect of the process to tilt the field in their favor.

STEVEN ROSENFELD

GUMBEL REPLIES

Washington, DC

■ Fitakis, Wasserman and Rosenfeld have been relentless in identifying problems with the 2004 presidential election in Ohio, for which they deserve credit. Where they fall down is in the evaluation of their data. Their assumptions—about the exit polling, about the supposed purging of Democratic votes and the supposed addition of fraudulent Republican ones—have been fueled at every turn by a fierce partisan desire to see George W. Bush as an illegitimate President. That, in turn, has tainted their analysis.

The most complete rebuttal of their assertions has been made, on more than one occasion, by Farhad Manjoo of *Salon*. On the exit polling question, professional pollster Mark Blumenthal of *mysterypollster.com* has done the best job of separating myth from reality and explaining why an exit poll favoring Kerry does not equal a Kerry victory. Space does

(Continued on Page 32)

IN THIS ISSUE

2 LETTERS

EDITORIALS & COMMENT

3 LAMONT WINS

4 CRISIS IN LEBANON

5 THE NEW NATIVISM

6 MERCENARY JACKPOT
*Jeremy Seahill*8 A BANKRUPT CUBA POLICY
Wayne S. Smith

COLUMNS

6 DEADLINE POET
Rice, the Icy Spinmeister, Tries Again...
*Calvin Trillin*9 DIARY OF A MAD LAW PROFESSOR
The Hydra of Jim Crow
Patricia J. Williams

10 THE LIBERAL MEDIA

Neocon Dreams, American Nightmares
Eric Alterman

ARTICLES

11 WHITE HEAT

What's fueling the new movement?
Bob Moser

18 NIGHTLY NATIVISM

CNN anchor Lou Dobbs leads the anti-immigration propaganda parade.
Daphne Eviatar

25 SAME OLD SONG

For the new nativists, what's past is prologue.
Daniel Tichenor

29 LOCKED AND LOADED

Chris Simcox mainstreamed the Minutemen. Now he'd better watch his back.
Susy Buchanan & David Holthouse

BOOKS & THE ARTS

33 HELLBECK: Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary Under Stalin
*Sheila Fitzpatrick*36 BUKHARIN: Philosophical Arabesques
Ronald Grigor Suny

38 A LETTER FROM 18 WRITERS

42 FILMS

Little Miss Sunshine • Quinceañera • My Country, My Country • The Pusher Trilogy • The Bridesmaid
Stuart Klawans

44 IN OUR ORBIT

*Sarah Goldstein**Cover by Gene Case and Stephen Klingl
Avenging Angels; illustration by
Christoph Niemann; photographs
by Lowell Handler*

EDITORIALS

Lamont Wins

Most Democrats were frustrated last December when one of the most prominent members of their party's Senate caucus, Joe Lieberman, condemned critics of the Bush Administration's mishandling of the war in Iraq by declaring, "It's time for Democrats who distrust President Bush to acknowledge he'll be Commander in Chief for three more years. We undermine the President's credibility at our nation's peril." One Democrat, Connecticut businessman Ned Lamont, decided that Lieberman's comments were the last straw, and when he recognized that no other antiwar candidate was going to challenge the Senator in the Connecticut primary, he decided to make the run. That's usually the recipe for a principled, if soon-to-be-forgotten, losing campaign. But Lamont did not lose. And Democratic Party leaders and strategists would be wise to recognize that the results from Connecticut are about more than one state and one senator.

Make no mistake, Lamont's victory was a breakthrough win for the antiwar wing of the Democratic Party. With a candidate who had no name recognition in January, a grassroots revolt by the great mass of antiwar Democrats displaced an eighteen-year incumbent Senator who in 2000 was the party's nominee for Vice President and who in 2004 campaigned for the party's presidential nomination. How did Lamont do it? By putting the war in perspective. He did not simply oppose the invasion and occupation of Iraq; he asked voters to think about the domestic costs of diverting \$250 million a day from the federal Treasury into a distant quagmire and the deep pockets of military contractors. Democratic leaders, who have struggled to develop a coherent alternative to the foreign and domestic policies of the Bush Administration, need to understand that Lamont's recognition of the linkages between a misguided war and unmet domestic needs gave

his candidacy the focus, the authority and the broad appeal that Democrats have lacked in recent campaign cycles.

How should Democratic leaders and strategists respond to the Lamont victory? First off, they need to unite their party behind its chosen candidate in Connecticut. Democratic senators, starting with Chris Dodd, Connecticut's senior Senator and a prospective 2008 presidential contender, must throw their full energy and considerable influence behind the candidate chosen by Democratic voters in order to avert—or, failing that, defeat—the sore-loser candidacy Lieberman hopes to run on a third-party line against Lamont and Republican Alan Schlesinger. Supporting Lamont matters in Connecticut, but it also matters nationally. As New York Senator Hillary Clinton recognized in July, when Lieberman first started talking about making a renegade run, anyone who intends to lead the Democratic Party in 2008 had better be aggressively backing its candidates in 2006. That demands more than just touching tarmac in Connecticut for a pre-election Lamont rally; Democratic leaders have to explain to labor, prochoice and environmental groups, as well as to campaign donors, that a party that wants to keep its antiwar base energized needs to support antiwar candidates who win Democratic nominations.

But ultimately, Democratic leaders in Washington and around the country don't just owe something to Lamont as their nominee. They owe something to their party and their country. The message that prevailed in Connecticut on August 8 is a message that can win for Democrats nationwide in November. In claiming his victory, Lamont mocked the empty rhetoric of President Bush and Senator Lieberman by declaring: "Stay the course—that's not a winning strategy in Iraq, and it's not a winning strategy for America." That's a better campaign slogan than anyone at the Democratic National Committee or the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee has come up with this year. Just as the party must embrace Ned Lamont, it must embrace his message.

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Crisis in Lebanon

As we go to press, the Israeli-Hezbollah conflict stands poised on the brink of a dangerous new escalation. After a month of warfare, Lebanon is already reeling from an Israeli bombing campaign that has killed about 1,000 people, most of them civilians; generated more than 800,000 refugees; and damaged or destroyed bridges, roads, factories, hospitals and an oil-storage facility, resulting in an oil spill that is one of the worst environmental crises in recent Mediterranean history. Hezbollah has fired several thousand rockets into northern Israel, killing about 100, wreaking havoc on major cities and causing tens of thousands of refugees to flee. What began as a border clash has become a war against civilians, on both sides, although the Israeli campaign has been far more destructive of civilian life, in large part because of Israel's greater power. As the international community struggled to forge a cease-fire resolution, Israel deepened its invasion, threatening an all-out assault on Lebanon's "strategic civilian infrastructure." Hezbollah, for its part, warned that if central Beirut is targeted, it would strike back at Tel Aviv with long-range rockets.

The belligerent parties desperately need constructive mediation to halt the fighting, and yet the United States has only inflamed the crisis. After weeks of preventing a cease-fire so as to give Israel more time to press its offensive, Washington pushed a UN draft resolution that would allow Israeli forces to stay in southern Lebanon. The draft in essence calls for the unilateral capitulation of Hezbollah, seeking to impose on the guerrilla force diplomatically what the Israeli military has not been able to achieve after a month of brutal combat. A more sensible resolution has been put forward by Lebanon and seconded by the Arab League. It proposes, in addition to an immediate end to the fighting, sending Lebanese army troops to patrol the south while calling on Israel to withdraw from Lebanon as well as from the disputed Shebaa Farms enclave; demilitarization or at least a withdrawal from the border region of Hezbollah's armed units; and a prisoner exchange. Neither side would be able to claim full victory with such a resolution, but both would be able to save face.

The fact is, Israel cannot achieve its military or political objectives with continued devastating attacks on the Lebanese infrastructure. The only reasonable option is to put internal constraints on Hezbollah in accord with the longstanding commitment of the international community to have the Lebanese government exercise control over all of Lebanon.

The abdication of responsibility by both the Bush Administration and Congress is destructive and short-sighted, but no surprise to close observers of the Washington scene. As Ari Berman recently pointed out on our website ("AIPAC's Hold"), the Israel lobby, comprising most prominently the American Israel Public Affairs Committee as well as Christian Zionists, "has made unconditional support for Israel an accepted cost of doing business inside the halls of Congress." A one-sided resolution supporting Israel's offensive—essentially crafted by AIPAC—passed overwhelmingly in both houses in the first week of the fighting. The Washington lobbyists are aided on the pundit front by the braying

EDITORIALS

The New Nativism

Over the past decade, millions of Hispanic immigrants have bypassed traditional urban destinations and put down roots in the American heartland. With large groups of newcomers moving to some of the most homogeneous, tradition-steeped places in the country, a backlash was predictable. But no one could have foreseen the breadth and fury of the new nativism that has risen up from Middle America with an ominous roar.

The prairie-fire spread of anti-Hispanic "Americanism" makes it incumbent upon Congress to pass an enlightened immigration bill that is both sensible and humane. But as the stories in this special issue of *The Nation* so vividly demonstrate, this new American nativism will not be tamped down simply by making legal and bureaucratic improvements to our immigration system. The roots of this xenophobic upsurge—fueled by economic frustrations and national-security phobias, and inflamed by voices of hatred—run far too deep for that.

The loudest voices of xenophobia have been elevated to the status of national heroes and soothsayers. Anti-immigration hardliners like Colorado Congressman Tom Tancredo and inflammatory pundits like CNN anchor Lou Dobbs (see page 18), along with a massive echo chamber of right-wing radio gladiators and small-town newspaper columnists, have become the main sources of information for millions of Americans about the causes and effects of Hispanic immigration. States and municipalities are scrambling to fill the void left by Congressional inaction with a mishmash of "reforms" designed to crack down on undocumented immigrants and the companies that hire them. Already this year, more than 500 bills have been introduced in state legislatures. And in this year's midterm elections, politicians all across Middle Amer-

ica—Democrats and Republicans alike—are one-upping one another with draconian proposals and demagogic rhetoric.

A militant grassroots nativism is gaining momentum, inspired by the idea that, as Minuteman co-founder Chris Simcox (see page 29) often says, private citizens must do "what the federal government refuses to do." For the first time since the backlash against civil rights, white-supremacists are flourishing. So are the far more popular "mainstream" anti-immigration groups, like the Federation for American Immigration Reform, which has attracted roughly 200,000 dues-paying members and supporters with a coded message that often differs from hate-group rhetoric only in its more polite tone and style.

Meanwhile, barely a whisper can be heard in the heartland about the economic benefits of the new immigration. Or about the decreased rates of violent crime in areas where immigration is the heaviest. Or about the strikingly similar values—family, religion, hard work—that Hispanic immigrants share with the most "traditional" of Middle Americans.

The anti-immigration drumbeat also drowns out a much-needed discussion about the working-class anxieties that have led so many Americans into the nativist camp: Why is the middle class shrinking? Whatever happened to upward mobility? Is there any end in sight to stagnating wages, disappearing benefits, corporate outsourcing?

The racist demagogues in this movement's leadership must be exposed and driven back to the margins of far-right extremism. But as you can hear in the voices of Tennesseans (page 11), the new American nativism has spread so widely because it offers an explanation—a tragically false one—for the woes of the working class. What this outburst ultimately makes clear, above all, is the pressing need for an honest and fearless national conversation about the deep-seated anxieties that rapid immigration has pushed to the surface.

chorus of neoconservative intellectuals (see Eric Alterman, page 10), who generally counter any questioning of Israeli actions or US support for them with the slur of anti-Semitism. These armchair warriors—apparently unchastened by catastrophic failure in Iraq—are now calling for a US war on Syria and Iran.

The dangers posed by a wider war in Lebanon are frightening: For the Lebanese, it could spell the destruction of a fragile civil society and the return of marauding militias. For Israel—which seems not to have learned the lessons of its 1982 invasion, when a war against the PLO and brutal occupation germinated a far more formidable opponent in Hezbollah—the destabilization of Lebanon could in the long run strengthen Hezbollah. Indeed, Israel's bombing campaign has united Lebanese of all sects as never before—against Israel. For the United States, which is seen by the world as Israel's co-belligerent, it could bring about renewed conflict with Iraqi Shiites, who have expressed solidarity with Hezbollah. For the wider Arab world, Hezbollah's martial prowess has rallied the dispossessed, who chafe under corrupt dictatorships which they despise as lackeys of Washington. A wider war could topple some of these "friends" of America.

Now is the time, before events spin out of control, for rational

heads to prevail. A few courageous members of Congress—Representative Dennis Kucinich, along with several dozen co-sponsors—called sensibly for an immediate cease-fire, while Senator Chuck Hagel called in general terms for a more even-handed US Mideast policy and a resolution of the underlying Arab-Israeli conflict—the source of so much of the region's tensions—along the lines of the Arab League's 2002 Beirut Declaration. Such moves should be encouraged, along with resistance to lobby pressures and the dangerous fantasies of armchair neocon warriors. The United States cannot in good conscience allow Lebanon's humanitarian crisis to continue. Washington must put aside its usual support-Israel-at-all-costs stance and use its influence to get Israel to call off its offensive and withdraw from Lebanon. The alternative—more warfare, increased instability and rising sectarian hatred—is a dead end for all of us.

ON THE WEB: John Ross reports from Mexico City, Jon Wiener writes about Israeli doves and Max Blumenthal writes about Christian Zionists.

Mercenary Jackpot

While the Bush Administration calls for the immediate disbanding of what it has labeled “private” and “illegal” militias in Lebanon and Iraq, it is pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into its own global private mercenary army tasked with protecting US officials and institutions overseas. The secretive program, which spans at least twenty-seven countries, has been an incredible jackpot for one heavily Republican-connected firm in particular: Blackwater USA. Government records recently obtained by *The Nation* reveal that the Bush Administration has paid Blackwater more than \$320 million since June 2004 to provide “diplomatic security” services globally. The massive contract is the largest known to have been awarded to Blackwater to date and reveals how the Administration has elevated a once-fledgling security firm into a major profiteer in the “war on terror.”

Blackwater’s highly lucrative “diplomatic security” contract was officially awarded under the State Department’s little-known Worldwide Personal Protective Service (WPPS) program, described in State Department documents as a government initiative to protect US officials as well as “certain foreign government high level officials whenever the need arises.”

A heavily redacted 2005 government audit of Blackwater’s WPPS contract proposal, obtained by *The Nation*, reveals that Blackwater included profit in its overhead and its total costs, which would result “not only in a duplication of profit but a pyramiding of profit since in effect Blackwater is applying profit to profit.” The audit also found that the company tried to inflate its profits by representing different Blackwater divisions as wholly separate companies.

The WPPS contract awarded in 2004 was divided among a handful of companies, among them DynCorp and Triple Canopy. Blackwater was originally slated to be paid \$229.5 million for five years, according to a State Department contract list. Yet as of June 30, just two years into the program, it had been paid a total of \$321,715,794. When confronted with this apparent \$100 million discrepancy, the State Department could not readily explain it. Blackwater’s two years of WPPS earnings exceed many esti-

mates of the company’s total government contracts, which the *Virginian-Pilot* recently put at \$290 million combined since 2000. Six years ago the government paid Blackwater less than \$250,000.

“This underscores the need for Congress to exercise real oversight on the runaway use of secret companies that have strong connections to the Bush Administration, for clandestine services all over the world,” says Illinois Democrat Jan Schakowsky, a leading Congressional critic of private military companies.

“This whole business of security is just insidious,” says former Assistant Defense Secretary Philip Coyle, who worked at the Pentagon from 1994 to 2001. “The costs keep going up, and there is no end in sight to what you can spend. What happens is you keep raising the threat levels to require more actions and more contracts to overcome these imaginary threats. It’s an endless spiral.”

In soliciting bids for the 2004 global contract, the State Department cited a need born of “the continual turmoil in the Mid East, and the post-war stabilization efforts by the United States Government in Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq.” It said the government “is unable to provide protective services on a long-term basis from its pool of special agents, thus, outside contractual support is required.” Coyle, now with the Center for Defense Information, believes the privatization of security duties historically fulfilled by US Marines and other active-duty military is directly related to the Iraq occupation. “Obviously the military could do it, but indeed the Administration is looking for places to get more troops for Iraq,” Coyle says.

While the WPPS program and the broader use of private security contractors is not new, it has escalated dramatically under the Bush Administration. According to the most recent Government Accountability Office report, some 48,000 private soldiers, working for 181 private military firms, are deployed in Iraq alone. Blackwater, now one of the most prominent and successful companies providing soldiers in Iraq, was relatively unknown until March 31, 2004, when four of its contractors were ambushed and killed in Falluja [see Scahill, “Blood Is Thicker Than Blackwater,” May 8]. In the days and weeks that followed, company executives hired ultra-connected lobbyists and were welcomed by powerful government officials as heroes, allowing the firm to solidify its role in the Bush Administration’s foreign policy apparatus.

Since 2003 Blackwater has held the high-profile job of guarding senior US officials in Iraq, including all three occupation-era ambassadors. The vaunted WPPS contract was awarded at the end of Paul Bremer’s tenure in Baghdad. Blackwater, which did not respond to repeated requests for comment, refuses to divulge where its forces are deployed under the program. WPPS documents say contractors may be dispatched almost anywhere, including on US soil. The State Department says explicitly that there is a “long-term” need for these “protective services.” Schakowsky says she will request a formal explanation from the department of the WPPS contract: “We need to know why the Bush Administration keeps writing blank checks to Blackwater and others, while it keeps Congress and the American people in the dark.”

JEREMY SCAHILL

CALVIN TRILLIN

‘MUSHROOM CLOUD’ RICE, THE ICY SPINMEISTER, TRIES AGAIN

It’s just the birth pangs of the new Mideast,
Rice says, in any place the jet can get her.
If what we see now is the new Mideast,
I’d have to say I liked the old one better.

Jeremy Scahill is a Puffin Foundation Writing Fellow at The Nation Institute. Researcher Garrett Ordower contributed to this story.

The Addict Who Invented Modern Surgery

At the beginning of the drug war in 1914 a public health survey of narcotics addicts found that "a very large proportion of the users...were respectable hard-working individuals in all walks of life..." It seems shocking now to hear that 80 percent of these "dope fiends" had jobs, homes and reputations but the medical literature is filled with addicts on maintenance doses who functioned normally throughout their lives. One of the most remarkable was Dr. William Stewart Halsted.

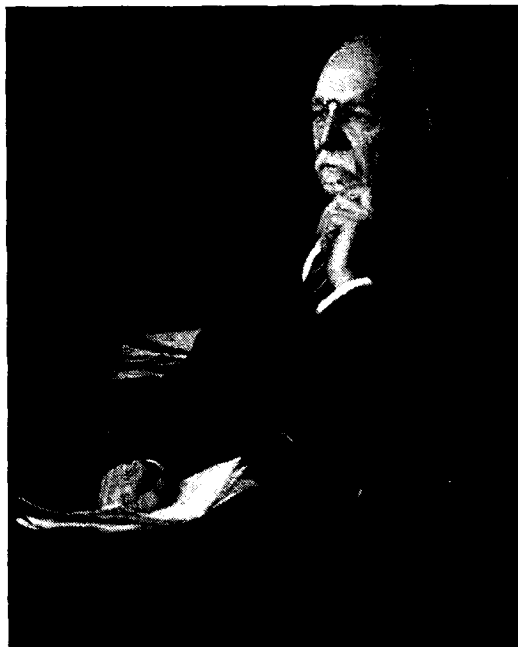
He was already a prominent surgeon in Manhattan while still in his twenties. Shortly after the Civil War Dr. Halsted discovered that cocaine could be used as a local anesthetic – a major leap for modern surgery. But Halsted was also experimenting on himself and he found that when he injected the drug into a vein he got a rush that was better than sex.

To wean him off his ferocious cocaine habit Halsted's friends chartered a schooner and shipped him off to the Virgin Islands. They managed to keep him clean for a couple of months but as soon as he hit the beach he started shooting up again. In a last ditch effort he checked himself into a hospital in Providence and through sheer will power he was completely cured. Or so the story went.

Halsted's skill and ingenuity as a surgeon made him world famous and in 1886 he joined three other renowned physicians to

create Johns Hopkins Hospital. His private life was as exemplary as his dazzling medical career and he died peacefully at 70. The fairytale would have ended there except for the little black book.

On the eightieth anniversary of Johns Hopkins the book was opened according to the instructions of its author, Sir William Osler, and in it was the "secret history" of



the Hopkins. It turns out that Halsted had cured his cocaine habit by switching to morphine. In other words, one of the four founders of Johns Hopkins was a morphine addict for over forty years, and while one colleague knew all about it, the others never suspected. Throughout his career Halsted tried to kick but he was never able to get by with less than 180 milligrams a day. "On this," said Dr. Osler, "he could do his work

comfortably and maintain his excellent physical vigor."

Halsted's story is revealing not only because it shows that a morphine addict on the proper maintenance dose can be productive. It also illustrates the incredible power of the drug in question. Here was a man with almost unlimited resources—moral, physical, financial, medical—who tried everything he could think of and he was hooked until the day he died.

Today we would send a man like that to prison. Instead he became the father of modern surgery.

Common Sense for Drug Policy

www.CommonSenseDrugPolicy.org www.DrugWarFacts.org

www.ManagingChronicPain.org www.MedicalMJ.org

www.TreatingDrugAddiction.org

info@cscp.org

Text excerpted from *Drug Crazy*, Mike Gray, Random House 1998

A Bankrupt Cuba Policy

Even as we move closer to a post-Castro Cuba, there has been no easing of the Bush Administration's hardline policy. That Washington's instincts are confrontational became clear in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, when Cuba expressed solidarity with the American people, called for dialogue and offered to sign bilateral agreements for joint efforts against terrorism. The Bush Administration rebuffed even those overtures and instead began calling for Castro's downfall. By 2003 this had led to the formation of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba, and by May 2004 to a 500-page action plan to bring an end to the Castro regime. Making it sound as though the regime was on the verge of collapse, economy and all, and that just a few more nudges would do it, the plan included measures to (1) tightly limit the travel of Americans to Cuba, including some painful new restrictions on the travel of Cuban-Americans; (2) increase Radio and TV Martí broadcasting; and (3) provide increased assistance to dissidents and other representatives of civil society in Cuba.

Also, the massive plan almost seemed to envisage a US occupation of Cuba so that we could show Cubans how to reorganize their country and make their trains run on time. In keeping with that, in July 2005 a transition coordinator was appointed, à la Paul Bremer in Iraq! In the latter case, at least we waited until we had occupied the country.

But with or without a transition coordinator, the plan didn't work—and it is difficult to understand why the Bush team thought it would. Increased radio and TV broadcasting, to the extent that it proved feasible, had virtually no impact on Cuban public opinion. Despite US restrictions on the travel of Americans, revenues from tourism actually increased. And as for aid to the dissidents, that had no effect either. Many dissidents even openly expressed their disagreement with the new US initiative. One, Oscar Espinosa Chepe, summed up their reaction: "We're not in agreement with any foreign government giving opinions as to what we Cubans must do."

Rather than collapsing, as the commission had predicted, the Cuban economy turned a corner and is showing strong signs of recovery, with a growth rate of at least 8 percent for 2005. Cuba has new and vitally important economic relationships with Venezuela and China. The price of nickel, now Cuba's major export, has reached record highs. And there are strong signs of a major new oilfield off the north coast; various countries are already bidding for drilling sites.

Ignoring this reality—pretending that the plan is working and, indeed, that we've reached a "new stage" in the transformation of Cuba—on July 10, with much fanfare, the Bush Administration issued a new "Compact With the Cuban People." This dredged up a few new measures against the Cuban economy—likely to be as ineffectual as earlier ones—but its basic purpose seemed to be to put forward a revised objective. The old goal had been to bring down the Castro government. The new one would be to prevent the so-called "succession strategy," i.e., that Castro be succeeded by his brother, Raúl, the First Vice President.

What timing! No sooner had the Bush Administration said it

was unacceptable than it happened. On July 31 Fidel announced that because of a delicate intestinal operation requiring an indefinite period of recuperation, he was signing power over to his brother, who would now be acting President. Subsequently, there were reports that Fidel would probably be able to resume his duties within a few weeks, but of course that remains to be seen.

People in Cuba took the succession calmly. If Fidel were for some reason incapacitated, they would expect Raúl to take over. Though lacking his brother's charisma, he is known as an excellent administrator. The Cuban military, which he leads, is one of the most efficient and respected institutions in the country.

But if the Cuban people seem willing to accept the interim rule of Raúl Castro, the Bush Administration is not. That's unfortunate, since there is reason to believe that Raúl is open to some degree of accommodation with Washington. The possibility was at least worth exploring, but the State Department immediately rejected the appointment, saying, "The imposition of Raúl Castro denies the Cuban people their right to freely elect their government." It then offered to assist their efforts toward a transition more to its liking. President Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice also called on the Cuban people "to work for democratic change on the island" and stressed that the United States stood ready to help "Cuba's transition to democracy."

Such entreaties—in effect calling on Cubans to work against the successor government—will fail. Indeed, that the Administration makes them at all suggests it is even further out of touch with reality than we might have imagined. There certainly are no legions of Cubans waiting to follow Washington's lead in this matter, especially not when US credibility is at an all-time low. Cubans need only look to the smoking ruins of Iraq for an example of US "democracy building."

In sum, what we have here is a totally bankrupt policy. The Administration will not deal with the existing government, whether led by Fidel or Raúl. It calls for a democratic transitional government but has no means of bringing one into being. Rather, it is left to issue calls in the night wind, to any Cubans who just might be listening, to create that new government. We shouldn't be surprised when no one answers.

WAYNE S. SMITH

Wayne S. Smith, now a senior fellow at the Center for International Policy in Washington, DC, is a longtime Cuba expert and former chief of the US Interests Section in Havana (1979–82).

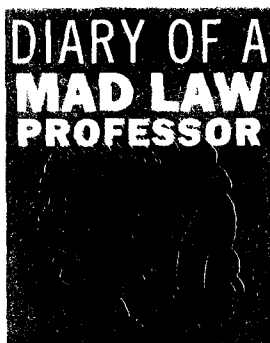
MURRAY BOOKCHIN

Murray Bookchin, who died on July 30 at 85, was a protean son of the left whose intellectual hegira took him from Communism through Trotskyism, anarchism and social ecology. It was in the last that he made his most creative contributions, through books such as *The Ecology of Freedom* (1982). An ideological infighter, Bookchin was appalled by the ideas espoused by followers of deep ecology, accusing them of privileging nature over humanity and of failing to fight the "grow or die" capitalist system. At the time of his death he was working on a magnum opus about the failure of the twentieth-century left—critical to the end.

PATRICIA J. WILLIAMS

The Hydra of Jim Crow

I saw a little article in a newspaper a few weeks ago about a summer program for children from war-torn areas. The idea is to bring them together in a peaceful vacation spot here in the United States, where they can learn about the humanity of those they have been raised to fear or kill. This project of building bridges rather than walls actually costs \$4,000 per child. It's a worthwhile effort, I think—anything to give children the kind of resilience and hope that might render them ambassadors of reconciliation in the ever more uncertain future.



At the same time, I wonder if teaching children to speak across all kinds of boundaries isn't one of the main objectives of a public school system. Public education has always existed to teach children how to become citizens, particularly in a nation as diverse as ours. Increasingly, it must also aim to educate them to operate in a diasporic and polycultural global marketplace. Yet even as we reach out to the young victims of conflicts beyond our shores, the notion of diversity as a necessary coping skill has not, of late, been well received here at home. Indeed, two school integration cases to be heard by the Supreme Court next term, *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1* and *Meredith v. Jefferson County Board of Education*, challenge diversity as any kind of compelling state interest. Although they have been treated by much of the media as just another set of affirmative action cases, in fact they are positioned to undo that cornerstone of the civil rights movement, *Brown v. Board of Education*. The plaintiffs argue that "racial balancing" is a constitutional violation of equal protection. To be precise, they claim that it's not only against the law to consider race for the purpose of segregating schools but also unconstitutional to consider race toward the end of *integrating* schools.

It is well to remember that the *Brown* decision was not merely about schools. It struck down the Jim Crow principle of "separate but equal." It stands for the notion that separation is inherently unequal, and that integration is a social good, a desired policy goal. Yet "integration" is not a word one hears very much these days. It is disparaged as "the diversity rationale" and "multiculturalism," and its devaluation has allowed the re-emergence of what I think of as the "segregation rationale." I do not have space here to reiterate the disgraceful and immoral rates of segregation that still exist in housing and schools, now rationalized as a mere matter of "choice"; or the horrendous disparity in health and longevity statistics, attributed to inherent mysteries; or the high school dropout rate of young minorities, dismissed as laziness; or the dismal disparities in employment rates, shrugged away as a collective failure of "individual responsibility"; or, of course, the appalling rates of minority incarceration.

This is all very dangerously circular—minorities have chosen their lot, so it's entirely rational not to let them move into your neighborhood or mix with them in your schools or insure their health. This in turn fuels the notion that it's reasonable to give them an extra once-over when you see them on your street. It

becomes "common sense" to impose distance and a separate set of controls on their movement in society. This is further complicated, of course, by the expanded and expanding "war on terror." Republican Congressman Christopher Shays has said, "If the choice is between a young man who fits the profile and an 85-year-old woman, you would check the young man—unless 85-year-old women become a threat." Of course, it doesn't make sense to wait until a homicidal little old lady blows herself up to deem "them" a threat. If we know anything about terror-

ists, it's that they are experts of the unexpected. And if we only scrutinize grandmothers *after* one has wreaked havoc, the rational terrorist will be on to the next unexpected category—of young blond women with seeing-eye dogs or some such. That truth is consistently trumped by popular convictions that you can "just tell" a terrorist when you see one. New York State Assemblyman Dov Hikind, a Brooklyn Democrat, in introducing legislation to allow racial profiling in subway searches, told the Associated Press: "They all look a certain way.... It's all very nice to be politically correct here, but we're talking about terrorism."

The equation of criminality and phenotype has become a poisonous spill of global apprehension: Mexican migrants stand in for Al Qaeda, Christian Lebanese for Hezbollah, Brazilians for British "home-grown terrorism." Against the backdrop of all this "preventive" sorting, the *Parents Involved in Community Schools* and *Meredith* cases challenge the state's ability to talk about racial composition in schools, whether for segregation or integration. In other words, we can't talk about remediation at all.

Yet when it comes to the public policy of police profiling, there seems to be lots of room for segregation by race or ethnicity. Selim Noujaim, a Connecticut state representative who emigrated from Lebanon, is another lawmaker who embraces profiling, even of himself. "They may target innocent people sometimes...but if this stops one attack or one killing, it's worth it." Some Americans, however, have already suffered too long as innocent "targets." From the segregated South to South Central Los Angeles, the civil rights movement has attempted to address antagonizing degrees of imprecision in law enforcement. It is precision alone that will save us, rather than vague fears and broadly racialized propensities for ill.

Schools, on the other hand, are a highly effective way to teach children to see past stereotype, if only we had the sustained will to mix them up—thoughtfully, consciously and across established social divisions. Why wait till it's a war zone to stage these uneasy conversations across battle lines? Serb and Croat kids holding hands. Palestinians and Israelis on *Sesame Street*, black and Hasidic kids from Crown Heights smiling on the 6 o'clock news—always the children, always on display, discussing how to overcome their differences. Learning this skill is the essence of what integration is all about, and it is not just a compelling state interest. It carries all the urgency of global peace. ■

ERIC ALTERMAN

Neocon Dreams, American Nightmares

Taking what might be considered the moderate neocon position on the Israel/Hezbollah war, the editors of *The New Republic* demand that the Bush Administration “move ruthlessly to prevent Iran from acquiring the deadliest arsenal of all,” while their contributor Michael Oren calls only for an Israeli, rather than an American, attack on Syria. Next door at *The Weekly Standard*, William Kristol sees no point in playing coy. Having already called for an American attack on Syria twenty months ago, he is now beating his bongo for an immediate “military strike against Iranian nuclear facilities.” Concerned about retaliation against American citizens in the form of terrorist attacks around the world? Don’t worry. Any and all “repercussions,” he promises, “would be healthy ones.” Kristol even imagines that such an attack could cause the Iranian people “to reconsider whether they really want to have this regime in power,” as if the natural reaction of people who see their country attacked, their families killed and their property destroyed is to side with the people who are bombing them (just like in, um... Iraq).

To borrow from both Beyoncé and Yogi Berra, it really is déjà vu all over again. Roughly four years, 2,600 American deaths, \$1 trillion and one murderous civil war ago, the same William Kristol predicted that a US invasion of Iraq would inspire “the principles of liberty and justice in the Islamic world.” Richard Perle, his comrade in armchair warfare, suggested that the impending US invasion would “transform the thinking of people around the world about the potential for democracy, even in Arab countries.”

Today, despite the lack of available troops owing to these delusional predictions, neocons are looking to Israel’s war in Lebanon as an excuse for attacks on Syria and Iran—coincidentally, also Israel’s enemies. Also coincidentally, four years ago many neocons were looking to exploit an attack on America as an excuse to attack Israel’s enemies. Writing in the *Wall Street Journal* in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, Seth Lipsky called for US attacks “from Afghanistan to Iran to Iraq to Syria to the Palestinian Authority.” Echoes of today’s war cries go back even further. Kristol insists that Israel’s problems with Lebanon demonstrate that “what’s under attack is liberal democratic civilization.” Twenty-four years ago, in a now infamous *Commentary* essay titled “J’Accuse,” Norman Podhoretz accused those who dissented from Israel’s catastrophic invasion of Lebanon “of faithlessness to the interests of the United States and indeed to the values of Western civilization as a whole.”

One does not need to take a position on the wisdom—or lack thereof—of Israel’s current invasion of Lebanon to question whether Israel’s interests are in fact identical to America’s. Kristol can title his editorial “It’s Our War,” but Hezbollah was not shooting missiles into Manhattan. And while we may not like its sponsor, Iran, last I checked we were not at war with that nation either. (In fact, we’re doing its dirty work, destabilizing antagonist Iraq and preparing the way for a Shiite ascendancy led by an Ira-



nian cleric.) But whenever one raises the issue of just how large Israel’s perceived well-being looms in the minds of those who seek to risk America’s blood and treasure for actions that happen to be at the top of AIPAC’s wish list, one is immediately accused of either anti-Semitism or, as the case may be, self-hatred. *New York Times* columnist David Brooks, for example, has argued that those who use the very term “neoconservative” are anti-Semites, “full-mooners” living on “Planet Chomsky.” *TNR* senior editor (and William Kristol’s writing partner) Lawrence Kaplan claims that “invoking the specter of dual loyalty to quiet criticism and debate amounts to more than the everyday pollution of public discourse.”

Things can become a little confusing when the same neocons who insist it is *ipso facto* anti-Semitic to ask what role Israel plays in their calculations instruct American Jews that they are paying too much attention to their own country’s best interests and not enough to Israel’s. Writing in—of all places—*The Weekly Standard*, David Gelernter attacks American Jews for their “self-destructive nihilism” in remaining “fervent supporters of an American left that is increasingly unable or unwilling to say why Israel must exist.” (This is nonsense about the vast majority of the left, of course, but ignore that for a moment.) Gelernter argues that “grassroots Democrats are increasingly dangerous to the Jewish state (not to mention the American state).” Note that the question of the “American state” is literally a mere parenthetical to Gelernter’s principal concern—the well-being of Israel. Over at *National Review*’s “The Corner,” Mona Charen can be found making the same sneering argument. She calls American Jews “stubborn and downright stupid” because they “despise George W. Bush and will donate time and money to any Democrat in 2008, while Bush is indisputably the most pro-Israel president in the history of the United States.” Again, it’s highly “disputable,” but never mind that. More to the point is the fact that Bush’s presidency—a complete and utter failure by virtually any empirical measurement—is also deemed irrelevant. It’s Israel alone that matters, according to these anti-American conservatives. (And woe unto American Jews when Christian America starts paying attention to their unpatriotic perfidy.)

What’s most immediately worrisome about the neocons’ long march through our institutions of government is the possibility that they may succeed a second time. According to Sidney Blumenthal’s reporting in *Salon*, neocon staffers for Dick Cheney and the NSC’s point man on the Middle East, Elliott Abrams (Norman Podhoretz’s son-in-law), “have discussed Syrian and Iranian supply activities as a potential pretext for Israeli bombing of both countries.” They are looking, according to this NSC source, “to widen the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah and Israel and Hamas into a four-front war.”

Four wars simultaneously? Led by this crew? After what we’ve seen in Iraq and Afghanistan? Is it me, or are the people who run this country dangerously out of their minds? ■

ARTICLES

White Heat

BOB MOSER

When I tell you that the area where I grew up now resembles Tijuana more than the US—well, hang on, you're about to see what I mean," says Theresa Harmon. Tennessee's most vociferous anti-immigration organizer has just picked me up, straight from work at a local construction firm, in her red 1986 Mercury Cougar—a "kicker," she calls it fondly, apologizing for the lack of air-conditioning. "Bless your heart—I'm used to the heat," she says, talking her usual mile a minute as she puffs a Misty long and noses into rush-hour traffic, headed for the South Nashville neighborhood where she grew up. "I mean, who would have ever thought Nashville would be an illegal alien magnet?" she says. "Nashville!"

In fact, the country-music capital has rapidly morphed into what one writer dubbed "a new Ellis Island," the unlikely symbol of America's biggest refugee and immigrant resettlement since the Industrial Revolution. For more than a decade now, most immigrants have been bypassing traditional urban destinations in favor of Middle American towns and cities where jobs are abundant and unemployment is scant. Music City has ranked first among US cities since 1990 in immigration growth, and now has the largest community of Kurdish refugees in the United States. Like the rest of Tennessee, Nashville also ranks high as a destination for undocumented Hispanics—and that's the part that rankles Harmon. "The Kurds are the nicest people you'd ever want to meet," she says. "A lot like the Hispanic folk we've had here for a long time."

Not the new ones. "Sadly, I've gotten to where I can look at a row of houses now and say, 'They're legal—they're illegal.' Simply because the ones that are legal tend to have that pride of place. The illegals? They don't give a rat's hind end about fitting in or being a US citizen. They're here because they want money, and that's it. They brought their chickens-in-the-yard culture over here with them. You see ten cars parked in the front yard, where you used to see flower beds."

Harmon has known some of those flower beds for decades.

Nashville

"My neighborhood is gone," she declares, steering down a winding hill through her old haunts. "I can't read the signs because I don't speak Spanish—in my native country!" As we hang a right onto the heavily trafficked business artery of Murfreesboro Road, Harmon starts pointing out evidence right and left. "As you see, everything for blocks is either a check-cashing place, a PayDay Loan or something Mexican. I don't know what the deal is with *that* one," she says, aiming a burgundy fingernail at a DryCleanersUSA sign, festooned in Stars and Stripes, that has been hung upside down.

"I can tell you what was in every one of these buildings until about five years ago," she says. "Some of them have been here since I was a child. Right there was my dentist's office," she says, pointing to a Western Union sign. "Now if it's not for rent, it's got a Mexican sign on it."

Harmon's culture shock was part of what prompted her to co-found Tennesseans for Responsible Immigration Policies (TRIP), now the state's leading anti-immigration group, in 2001. But even if she sometimes sounds like a walking, talking cultural-backlash cliché, she doesn't exactly fit the mold. Harmon, who as a teenager cruised South Nashville with a big gold marijuana-leaf decal on the back of her Camaro ("it matched," she says), has always had a rebellious streak as wide



Theresa Harmon: 'My neighborhood is gone.'

as Tennessee. "Maybe I read too many mysteries as a child," she says. "I have to think out of the box." She fell in love with activism in 1999 when she partnered with the ACLU in a successful challenge to a new uniform policy at two of her children's public schools. "I don't know about you, but I see kids going to school in uniforms, and I'm seeing little Nazis heiling Hitler."

Harmon sees the same mindless conformity taking hold in America. "We've let George W. Bush do more damage than Bill Clinton and every President before him could have even thought about doing. It's all about corporations. They run this country, and they run this world. That's not a world I want to live in. But everybody just behaves like sheep." Including those who've supported the war in Iraq. "How many kids did we have killed over there today for no good reason?" she asks. "Two? Ten? Twenty? Get. Them. Out. Of. There." It all fits together for

Harmon: opposing Bush, opposing corporatism and opposing immigration. "This whole influx happened because big business wants cheap labor," she says. "Just like that war is making corporations a lot of money. And Bush is doing all he can to help them."

As the temperature over immigration keeps rising, Harmon says she worries about the level of frustration she's hearing, more and more, from other nativists in Tennessee and around the country. "The most popular formula is, 'soap box, ballot box, ammo box.' They'll X out the first two, like those options are gone and all you can do is arm yourself and get ready. I'm looking at that going, *phew!* It's going to get ugly."

Welcome to Tennessee, white-hot nexus of the new American nativism. When Governor Phil Bredesen complained this summer that Tennesseans were being whipped into a "frenzy" over immigration, some took issue with the culprits he cited—opportunistic Republican candidates—but not a soul could challenge the accuracy of his description. From formerly homogenous factory towns in East Tennessee to the formerly biracial city of Memphis in the west, the topic of the day—the debate of the day—is how to handle Tennessee's transformation into a major "destination state" for immigrants.

The transformation commenced in the 1990s, when Tennessee's immigrant population shot up 278 percent. The backlash was muted until April 2001, when the state became the first to grant driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants. The legislative battle over licenses sparked immigrant-rights activism across the state. It also stoked fears among many natives that the already-brisk migration into Tennessee might just keep picking up steam. "If you make yourself a welcome wagon for immigrants, you'll get plenty," says Donna Locke, head of Tennesseans for Immigration Control and Reform. "That's certainly what Tennessee did."

The groundswell of anti-immigrant sentiment first started to crest five months after the driver's license bill was passed, says David Lubell, director of TIRRC (Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition): "After September 11, that's when it all changed here. They started to talk about 'driver's licenses for terrorists.' Opinions really began to harden."

In the state legislature immigration-rights groups still usually have the upper hand. This year, they fended off nineteen of twenty "reform" bills, losing only a minor skirmish. Having a Democratic majority in the state House, which generally sticks together on immigration issues, certainly helps—as does the pro-immigration lobbying muscle of the state's Chambers of Commerce.

But on the campaign trail, especially this year, nativism rules. The big statewide race this year is to replace Bill Frist in the US Senate, and it features three Republican contenders who've spent much of the primary season honing their Wyatt Earp imi-

tations. One of them, former State Representative Ed Bryant, got so carried away in May that he lit out for the Arizona border to help the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps splice together a fence. Not to be outdone, shoo-in Democratic nominee Harold Ford Jr., the whiz-kid Congressman with a generally moderate voting record on immigration issues, hit the airwaves in June with a startling new ad. "Every day over 5,700 miles of border stands unsecured," Ford's voice intones solemnly. "Every day almost 2,000 people enter America illegally. Every day hundreds of employers look the other way, handing out jobs that keep illegals coming. And every day the rest of us pay the price."

While politicians legitimize nativist arguments, the flames of bigotry are fanned in Tennessee by a plethora of sources—not only "mainstream" anti-immigration groups and websites like Harmon's and Locke's but ad hoc "concerned citizens" groups in small towns around the state.

Fears of a Ku Klux Klan revival in East Tennessee have been stoked by large turnouts of Tennessee Klansmen at recent rallies of a newly invigorated KKK in nearby northern Alabama—and by two hate crimes that put Tennessee immigrants on notice last year. In one case, a former Klansman named Daniel Shertz was arrested for plotting to blow up buses carrying Hispanic immigrants from Tennessee to Florida. In the other, a Mexican grocery store in Maryville was torn up by five young white supremacists who scrawled swastikas, "SS," and "WP," for white power, on the front of the store as their calling card.

"Tennessee has a uniquely toxified mix when it comes to immigration," says Devin Burghart of the Center for New Community, which monitors the nativist movement and works to counter its message. The toxins don't just come from campaign rhetoric, and anti-immigration and hate groups—they also churn up through the media. In June the big Nashville daily, the *Tennessean*, rolled out the colorful story of Coopertown Mayor Danny Crosby, a modern-day Boss Hog who—among a stunning array of other alleged offenses—reportedly ordered his officers to target Hispanics for traffic tickets (whether or not they committed any violations). But the Crosby saga didn't stand a chance against the lurid tale of drunk-driving Mexican immigrant Gustavo Garcia Reyes, who after numerous previous convictions ran into and killed a white couple in Mount Juliet, the Nashville suburb where Theresa Harmon lives. For weeks his mug shot made regular appearances on front pages as the story flew around nativist websites nationwide and landed on Fox News. But nobody rode the story harder than Tennessee's most poisonous media personality.

Late this April, in an old factory complex converted into swank suburban shopping digs in the Nashville suburb of Franklin, more than 1,000 Tennesseans came out to cheer their hero, 99.7-FM drive-home-time host Phil Valentine. The son of a former Democratic Congressman in North Carolina, Valentine is a leading voice—and instigator—of Tennessee's nativist backlash. "Wake up and smell the tacos," Valentine likes to say, flaunting his political incorrectness. His website recently featured a full-color image of the Statue of Liberty wearing a sombrero,

'This is Middle America, and there's no winning this immigration debate without understanding what people think here.'

Bob Moser, a Nation contributing writer, is editorial director of The Nation Institute's Investigative Fund.

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with a huge black mustache pasted on, a jar of salsa instead of a flame and a bottle of Patron cradled in her lower hand. Liberty rests on a tottering foundation of Chicklets, Tostitos and a Taco Bell sign.

All in all, a lot like the "joke" that slipped out of Valentine's mouth at his rally in Franklin, where three Republican state legislators joined him on stage. Susan Tully, field director of FAIR (the Washington-based Federation for American Immigration Reform), was complaining about the Border Patrol's "catch and release" policy, saying that illegal immigrants were returned the first time they were caught, the second time, the third time...all the way to seven times. And what, Tully asked rhetorically, do we do the eighth time? "Shoot 'em!" Valentine interjected. The suburbanites roared their approval.

Two months later, in his nondescript studio on Music Circle, I ask about his incendiary comment. "I just said that as an ice-breaker and as a joke," he says. "I am not a racist. I'm not advocating seriously that we shoot anybody. It's just the frustration level."

The frustration level among Tennessee nativists began to reach fever pitch this spring. On March 29 more than 10,000 Hispanic immigrants marched in the largest protest in Nashville history; there were smaller but impressive marches in several other towns and cities across the state. Then came the "Day Without Immigrants" boycott on May 1, when an estimated 10,000 Hispanics in Tennessee took part. Valentine organized a counterboycott with Theresa Harmon's group, TRIP, targeting businesses that shut down for the day. "I've talked to people who said that before the protests they were sitting on the sidelines," Valentine says, "but now they are incensed. They see that these people are carrying Mexican flags, they don't speak English—they are in your face. People are more attuned to what the problem is."

Valentine's show dishes up a full menu of problems: immigrant diseases, "terrorist gangs" and, of course, illegal killers. "If these people were to get vetted like everybody else, we would get rid of the Gustavo Garcia Reyeses before they come over the border," he says. "That particular case has really put a face on the immigration debate like nothing else." That's partly because of Valentine's efforts. The murder in Mount Juliet gave him a perfect opportunity to alert his listeners to a purported wave of violent crime committed by illegal immigrants in Tennessee and nationwide. "I have heard that from thirteen to twenty-five people a day are being killed by illegal immigrants," he tells me. (He's a little sketchy on the source.)

But does Valentine believe the biggest nativist myth of all, that there's a *reconquista* afoot? "Oh, absolutely," he says. "Not with all of them, but with many of them. I think there's a plan to move Hispanics into the Southwest and vote it back to Mexico. I think there's a big plan to do that. They think that the territory was taken illegally from them in the Mexican-American War.

That's where this *reconquista* thing comes from. They are nuts. This is the United States of America. We can't change that!"

Nor should we have to, Valentine says. "A lot of these people who are illegal want to come and plant their culture inside of ours," he says. "We're having to, now, speak Spanish, and try to understand them. We've never had to understand anybody."

Phil Valentine gets on Rick Casares's very last nerve. "I don't like to say this about anybody," Casares says, "but he's just a racist." Casares has been working only six months as outreach coordinator for TIRRC, the statewide immigration-rights group, and he knows he needs to be more politic when talking to reporters. But he feels this in his bones. "For me, it's personal," he says. "My parents were illegal immigrants from Mexico." His father, among other accomplishments, rose to become mayor pro tem in the predominantly white town of Rosemeade, California. Still, Casares says, it was ugly at times. But the discrimination he saw his parents face "pales to what immigrants face today in this climate of poisonous rhetoric."

Casares's job is to detoxify. He's heading a new Welcoming Tennessee Initiative, inspired by a successful effort in Iowa. "We're trying to highlight what we have in common, and get past the myths and stereotypes that diminish immigrants' worth," he says. The myth-busting message will be spread around the state by regional volunteers trained to address civil and community groups, churches, minority and business groups. Welcoming Tennessee has also launched a billboard campaign appealing directly to native Tennesseans' values. The first shows two grinning children and quotes the Book of Matthew: "I was a stranger,

and you welcomed me." The second is a collage of images of immigrants throughout US history; the message is, "Welcome the Immigrant You Once Were."

Casares knows that welcoming immigrants is not exactly at the top of most Tennesseans' agendas these days. "Last year we turned back gay marriage," he says. "This year we're turning back the brown horde."

"The facts just bounce off people," says Casares's TIRRC colleague Stephen Fotopulos. "The way people get their news now, there's no way to counter the image of a white, native-born Tennessee family killed by an illegal immigrant. It is so much harder to quantify, to get your mind around, all the benefits that would go away if these same people weren't here."

It's especially hard when people are yelling at you because you're standing up for "illegals." Like Casares, Fotopulos is a military veteran who says his training from hazardous-duty zones now serves him well. "I'm still surprised at the things people will say," he says, reading from a recent e-mail message: "'You are a lying, deceitful, rotten traitor and an enemy to every American for betraying your country.... If you like illegal aliens so much,



Phil Valentine: 'Shoot 'em!'

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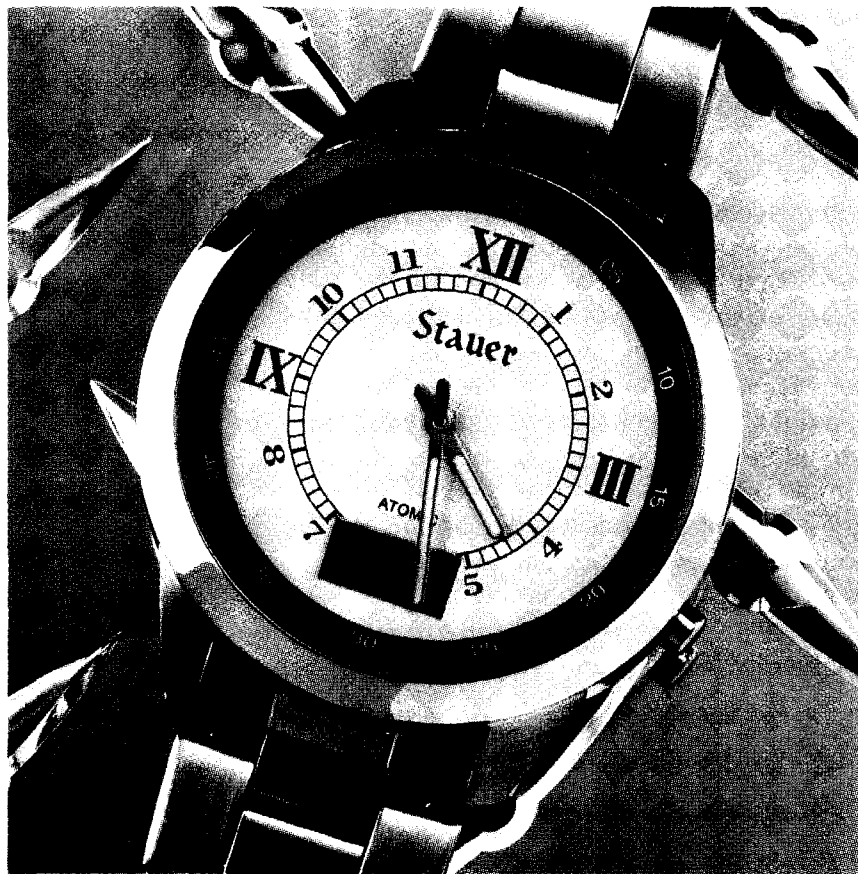
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THAT'S WHY SO MANY SOMEBODIES READ IT

Dave Matthews is a longstanding

(Legally speaking, of course, everything has an owner, but as a *Nation* editor once wrote, "it is one of the superb facts about *The Nation* that you can no more 'own' it than you can own the spirit it represents.")

why don't you go south of the border, live there and stay there? And take all the other turd-lovers and criminal illegal alien law-breaking filth with you. You belong with the other inferior, sub-standard scum. You're not good enough to be an American.'"

While there's no doubt 2006 has already been a tumultuous year in Tennessee, Fotopulos says he's "not pessimistic at all. I'm constantly amazed at how we'll go out to a rally where people have these Phil Valentine talking points and are as certain as they can be. We start talking about it, and we usually end up at a reasonable place where we see that we really do want the same things. It's bad to have a system that doesn't work. It is. And there are people here who have very real cultural concerns, who see the life they've known being submerged. We can talk about that. But what truly changes people is human contact. In fifteen years everybody here will know Hispanics personally, and it just won't be so much of an issue."

In the meantime, Fotopulos sees the bright side. "What I really value about being in Tennessee right now," he says, "is that this is Middle America, and there's no winning this immigration debate without understanding what people here think."

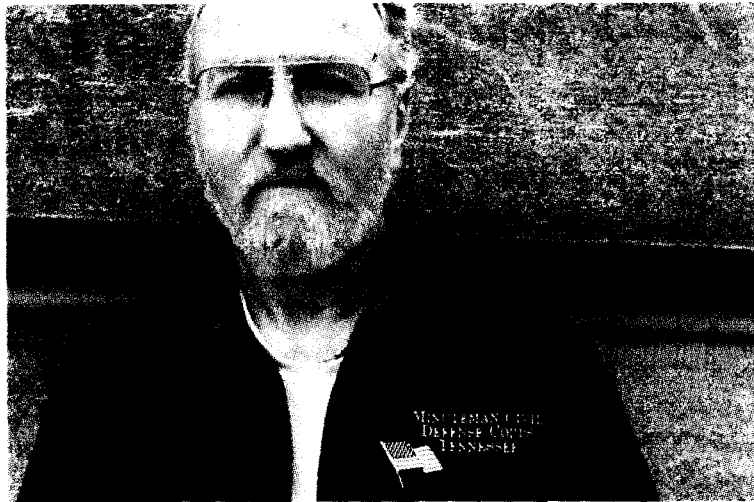
It's easy to chalk up the nativist frenzy in Tennessee entirely to the usual suspects: gut-level racism, bigotry, ignorance, NIMBYism, right-wing radio hosts. But what's eating Tennesseans, and hundreds of thousands of other Middle American nativists, is also something deeper, subtler—and likely to outlast the current debates over immigration policy. "This is not just about immigrants and immigration," says Devin Burghart. "It's something much greater—the nexus of race, national identity, who we are and who we want to be."

You can hear it in Theresa Harmon's worries about corporate fascism. You can hear it from Tennessee's other leading anti-immigration activist, Donna Locke, whose quality-of-life concerns are larger than NIMBYism. Locke, who says, "I consider myself a liberal," once agitated for "all the usual late '60s and early '70s causes." The issue that stuck with her into adulthood was overpopulation and what it means for the human environment. "I've always felt that America could set an example for the rest of the world by dealing sensibly with population growth," she says. "The more crowded it gets, the cheaper life becomes, and the easier it becomes to exploit people. Individuality dies, and with it dies a lot of what makes us ethical and moral human beings. I think it will be a disaster for the whole world if America loses that. And we are losing it. You can see it happening in Tennessee."

You can hear those broader anxieties, in very different terms, from Carol Swain. A black conservative who studies white

nationalism and teaches at Vanderbilt University, Swain believes that by "not thinking deeply about our immigration policies, we have created the conditions for long-term racial unrest." As the day when white Americans constitute a minority of the population grows nearer, Swain predicts, "white people will increasingly see themselves as under attack. And it makes sense. If I were white, I would be feeling a lot of fear and uncertainty. I'd want to talk about it openly, too. But you can't talk about it. That's a big reason the lure of white nationalism is strong right now. As we dance around the real issues, ordinary people will find answers where they can."

When I ask Swain why she is an immigration restrictionist herself, she ponders a while, then puts a new spin on the deep-seated frustrations that simmer beneath the surface of the new nativism. "I'd feel better about it if I believed in this country," she says. "When I see how poor black and white people are treated—and have been treated—I can't hold out any hope that millions of working-poor Hispanic people are going to receive better treatment. Things are not fluid in America. The system is not fair. Immigrants will learn that after a while. The American Dream promises a lot, but delivers very little."



Jim Carter: 'We're gonna get the fire roaring.'

"Now, you be careful," the director of Tennessee's Minuteman Civil Defense Corps is telling me over the phone. "Don't drive too fast. Take your time. Be safe."

I'm headed toward Jim Carter's home and shooting range, twenty minutes south of Nashville in the booming suburb of Murfreesboro. Telltale signs of breakneck development whoosh by on either side of the highway: long swaths of denuded earth, ragged mounds of orangy dirt, Hispanic workers climbing and hammering. Carter lives out beyond the new subdivisions, on ten woody acres ringed by an electronic security fence. He waves me through the front gate and points me, aircraft carrier-style, to a spot on the front lawn where my rental car can sit in the shade. After introducing one of his Minuteman "coordinators," a hulking young carpenter named Ryan Kerr, Carter leads us into the comfy house he built, "foundation up," after retiring from his job painting commercial aircraft. As we sit down on his glassed-in back porch, Carter fetches me a cold bottle of water. I'm beginning to wonder what such a gentle soul is doing leading a Minuteman group. Until a few minutes later, when Carter leans forward, gazes laserlike through his yellow shooting lenses and declares: "We have some people already who are like kindling. We have to be the spark. We're gonna get the fire roaring. People are gonna have a bonfire."

Carter, a Vietnam vet with a white beard and rosy complexion, started sparking his Minuteman chapter in February. He now has "over eighty" volunteers signed up. It's hard work,

though. "I probably get thirty, forty e-mails each and every day with people wanting information," says Carter. "My wife complains because sometimes I have to work from 6 o'clock in the morning until I can't see anymore, have to turn the headlights on the lawn mower."

Why does he do it? When I ask the question, Carter turns to Kerr—as if to say, *there's your reason*. Until recently, Kerr ran his own framing business. He says he did well until he refused to join his peers in hiring illegal immigrants and slashing wages. "By trying to be legit, I was losing twelve to fifteen hundred a house as I was framing. I had fifteen people working for me, three crews. By being stubborn, I ran my business into the dirt. If I'd hired illegal immigrants, I'd be living high on the hog right now."

Carter says that much of the Minuteman membership, so far, consists of white folks—and two black men—who've had similar struggles. Now they're hatching plans to confront local construction firms that have "gone brown." "We'll pick our places, inform the owners of our intentions, and then we'll start marching on them," Kerr says. "To me, it's a no-brainer. If we show up with eighty or ninety people and the *Daily News Journal*, we're probably going to stop this. Within a month, we'll get rid of all of them. They're going to know the heat is coming."

The other goal, Carter says, is to recruit enough members "to have a small group on the border, fifty-two weeks out of the year." He and Kerr both plan to be part of the MCDC's next Border Watch month, in October. Carter will surely not lack for ammunition. At the immigrant-rights march in Nashville this

spring, when he was accompanied by about twenty-five other counterprotesters, "I had five guns on me. I had over 150 extra rounds of ammo just in case. I didn't know what was going to happen, or who was going to be there."

Kerr is resigning his membership on the county's Republican Party executive committee now that he's a Minuteman leader. "What I'm doing now is going to upset a lot of people who put me forth" in the GOP, he says. "I've been a contractor here for twelve years. I know these people. And they know me, and know that I'm a 250-pound state wrestler. They have that in the back of their heads. My goal is to have twenty contractors up in my face. If I don't have twenty, I'm not making enough noise."

"The only time we will become violent is in self-defense," Carter interjects.

"Yeah, well, they're going to come after me. There's going to be some upset people who are affected by this. My thing is, you make the first move and there's witnesses, and we'll take care of it from there." A five-beat pause. "But let's hope it won't come to that. Calm. Positive attitude. Restraint." Kerr says it like a mantra he's trying to learn—so much so that it makes us all laugh. Until Carter speaks up.

"If it gets too violent, I still got six acres out on Walter Hill," he says, referring to a plot of land he owns in the country. "I'll take my tent out there, take my long guns with me, put up my tent and stay out there."

"If they come to shoot you, they'll have to hit me first."

"Well, if they shoot through you they'll hit me, 'cause I'll be right there with you." ■

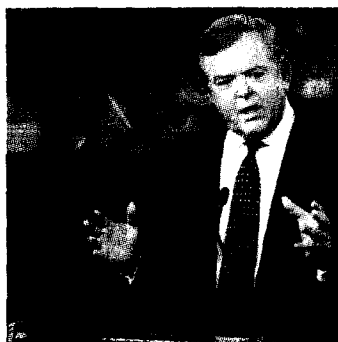
CNN ANCHOR LOU DOBBS LEADS THE ANTI-IMMIGRATION PROPAGANDA PARADE.

Nightly Nativism

DAPHNE EVIATAR

On May 1 the nationwide boycott billed as "A Day Without Immigrants" was all over the evening news. ABC's *World News Tonight* reported that "more than a million people took to the streets in thirty cities," part of "a new wave of protests against legislation that would increase the penalties for being in the US illegally." On CBS, "they left their jobs and took to the streets to show us what America would be like without millions of immigrant workers." On Fox, "illegal immigrants and their allies took to streets across America...in an effort to show their economic importance to the country."

But on CNN's *Lou Dobbs Tonight*, it was a different story. "Hundreds of thousands of illegal aliens and their supporters today failed in their attempt to shut down most of our cities to support amnesty for all illegal aliens," the network's 6 PM news



PETER MORGAN/REUTERS

anchor reported that evening. Dobbs elaborated in his online column: "It is no accident that they chose May 1 as their day of demonstration and boycott. It is the worldwide day of commemorative demonstrations by various socialist, communist and even anarchic organizations... No matter which flag demonstrators and protesters carry today, their leadership is showing its true colors to all who will see."

You might expect that sort of McCarthyesque description from Bill O'Reilly, Rush Limbaugh or some other famously right-wing provocateur on Fox or talk-radio. But Lou Dobbs, on CNN? These days, the network once pilloried by conservatives as a leading voice of the "liberal media" is offering an expansive platform to the nation's leading spokesman for anti-immigration hardliners. Night after night, under the rousing headline "Broken Borders," the distinguished-looking 61-year-old instructs his growing audience that illegal immigrants import deadly diseases, rampant crime and international terrorism; they live off welfare, destroy public schools and burden

Daphne Eviatar writes frequently about media, law and politics. She directs the Program in Law and Journalism at New York Law School.

REVIEW

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hospitals; what's more, most haven't even learned to speak English. Add that they're foot soldiers sent by the Mexican government to "reconquer" the Southwest, and by the end of the hour, we have seen the enemy—and he's a Spanish-speaking immigrant. Despite the grave threat, Dobbs declares, our lawmakers are doing nothing about it. Thus Dobbs branded the recent bipartisan Senate reform bill, designed to allow more immigrants to work here legally while also securing the borders, "The Amnesty Agenda"—a "pathetic sham" that would make a "mockery" of the American people.

Dobbs's hysteria and jingoism are now notorious. He's been ridiculed by Jon Stewart on *The Daily Show* for calling for the abolition of "ethnocentric" holidays that involve waving other nations' flags (thus eliminating St. Patrick's Day); by Andy Borowitz, who wrote in *Newsweek* that President Bush had decided to move Dobbs to the Mexican border instead of 6,000 National Guard troops; and by the hosts of a Los Angeles radio show, who recently offered a cash prize to the first illegal immigrant mother to name her baby Lou Dobbs.

'Lou went from straddling the line between journalist and pundit to becoming a full-blown pundit,' says a former CNN senior staffer.

If the anchor's antics make for good comedy, they also have a sinister side: Many Americans take him seriously. "Outside of elected officials he's undoubtedly the most influential spokesman for the anti-immigration movement," says Wayne Cornelius, a political science professor and director of the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies at the University of California, San Diego. "I think he's actually putting real pressure on elected officials by riling up a significant portion of their base."

As if to underscore that influence, Dobbs conducts a poll that works something like a viewer comprehension test. During one "Broken Borders" segment in May, for example, Dobbs reported on the Senate's immigration reform bill, part of what Dobbs later called "the absolute abdication of responsibility by this government to provide for the safety of the American people." He then reported on a rally in Washington of "illegal aliens and their supporters again trying to pressure Congress into granting amnesty to millions of illegal aliens in this country." That led into the evening's poll question: "Do you believe US senators and representatives are more concerned with meeting the demands of illegal aliens marching in the streets than they are with their constituents?" The results? Surprise! 96 percent of viewers said yes. (As reported on the show, Dobbs's viewers generally back him up in his polls between 95 and 99 percent of the time.)

Slightly more scientific polls are almost as conclusive. A recent CNN survey revealed that more people trust Dobbs than the President on the issue of illegal immigration. As Jack in California wrote, in one of the many adulatory letters Dobbs reads during every broadcast, "Lou Dobbs for President. Impeach Vicente Fox!"

Dobbs began turning his longtime financial-news show, CNN's *Moneyline*, into an opinion rant about five years ago, capitalizing on the issue of outsourcing. Attacking free-trade policies and the companies that take advantage of them in a

series of segments called "Exporting America," Dobbs increasingly cast himself as a quixotic champion of an American middle class ignored by politicians in the interests of big business. Although his privately sold newsletter still recommended investing in some of the companies outsourcing the most jobs, as reported by the *Columbia Journalism Review*, publicly Dobbs became the Harvard-educated spokesman for the little guy. The little American, that is. Over time, Dobbs's anger that foreigners overseas were getting formerly American jobs was transformed into fury at the foreigners taking the low-paid jobs that are still here. "Broken Borders" was born.

By vilifying immigrants, Dobbs is following in a long line of illustrious, and notorious, Americans who have played pivotal roles in the nation's periodic outbreaks of nativism [see Daniel Tichenor, page 25]. "Whenever we've had a great

wave of immigration, there's been a backlash," says Wayne Cornelius. But there's a difference this time. "In previous waves, the reaction can be attributed in part to eco-

nomics. Now, unemployment is down to 4 percent; there's no reason to target them."

Still, Dobbs, who abandoned the financial-news pretense when he renamed his show *Lou Dobbs Tonight* in 2003, has taken an increasingly hard-line, restrictionist view. He champions Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner's bill in the US House (HR 4437), which would make assisting any undocumented immigrant a felony. He supports sending tens of thousands of troops to militarize the US-Mexico border, and favors building a fence along its entire length. And although he's never acknowledged it, his constant call for enforcing US immigration law would mean deporting some 12 million people.

As the stakes grow higher and Dobbs's tone more shrill, his popularity has soared. In the second quarter of this year his show had the largest total viewer growth of any on CNN, with more than 800,000 viewers each night. While that's still only half of O'Reilly's top-rated cable-news audience, Dobbs is catching up, and CNN is giving its star more and more airtime. Now, in addition to five hours a week on his own show, Dobbs is regularly featured as an immigration expert on CNN's other evening news programs. (CNN says Dobbs is a legitimate immigration specialist deserving of extra airtime: "Anytime you can have somebody bring that level of expertise to a subject, you'd want to have that knowledge on the air," says network spokeswoman Christa Robinson.)

Not everyone inside CNN feels that way. Although the network keeps a tight rein on what even former staff can say (former anchor Aaron Brown, for example, needed permission from CNN to speak to me, which was denied), one senior former Dobbs staffer told me, on condition of anonymity: "Lou went from straddling the line between journalist and pundit to becoming a full-blown pundit, shifting the debate very, very far to the right. People don't get it. They trust that CNN is a reputable organization, so they trust that he's a respected journalist. They think he won't put anyone on who's a right-wing nut. But he does."

Another former CNN news staffer from an overseas bureau

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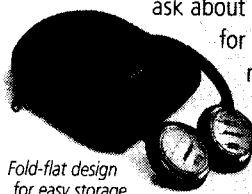
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said (also on condition of anonymity) that whenever Dobbs's producers contacted the bureau for stories, "they would request stories that would fit their agenda.... We wanted to provide a balanced view. But people on Dobbs's show would look at the script and ask for changes. If we gave too much of a balanced view, they would kill the story."

As for why the network tolerated this, both current and former CNN staff, although not privy to executive-level discussions, said their understanding was that Dobbs had autonomy based on finances. "His show brought in a lot of revenue," one former senior Dobbs staffer said.

As another former CNN newsperson put it: "Lou was one of the originals at CNN, and when he left, they really suffered. (Dobbs left CNN in 2000, reportedly after a dispute with management, and returned a year later.) Now Lou is his own island; he dictates to them what he does."

According to several former staffers, many at CNN find Dobbs's views deeply offensive. But over time, many have become jaded. "At first people said, 'How can they let him keep beating this dead horse? There's no even-handedness; it's outrageous,'" one former senior news staffer told me. "But now, people have become so desensitized to it all. Then again, if you want to stand on your soapbox about journalistic integrity, where are you going to go?" (CNN president Jonathan Klein refused *The Nation's* requests for an interview, but he has told the *New York Times* that "Lou's show is not a harbinger of things to come at CNN.")

Class commercialism isn't a new motive for TV news, of course. But in this case, the impact may be profound. Dobbs's show "has become the pipeline for nativists and nationalists to move their views from the margins into the mainstream," says Devin Burghart, a director at the Center for New Community, which monitors anti-immigrant groups. "Many of the most hard-core anti-immigrant activists have appeared on his program—people like Joe McCutchen, one-time member of the Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC), the largest white nationalist organization in the country. He appeared on the program without any attempt [by Dobbs] to expose his involvement with those organizations."

Indeed, Dobbs often features and quotes activists with links to extremist and even openly racist groups, as the Southern Poverty Law Center, which tracks hate groups, reported last year. Yet Dobbs consistently fails to mention those connections—even when he or his reporters interview the founder and leader of a hate group. Glenn Spencer, for example, who heads the nativist American Patrol, deemed a hate group by both the SPLC and the Anti-Defamation League, was portrayed as a hero for running a "shadow border patrol" with "a handful of committed friends" using technology that rivals the federal government's. The reporter didn't mention that Spencer has also predicted a war with Mexico; his popular website, which often quotes Dobbs and links to his show, spreads rumors that immigrants are plotting to overthrow the Southwest United States. There's also Protect Arizona Now (PAN), which successfully pressed a ballot initiative that denies state services to illegal aliens and requires state employees to report them. Dobbs ran glowing features on the group and its campaign, never mentioning what many news outlets had reported: that Virginia Abernethy, a self-described "white

separatist" and former editorial adviser to the white-supremacist CCC, headed PAN's national advisory board.

Dobbs has used material directly from the CCC—in the process spreading and adding legitimacy to some of that group's more bizarre views. In an almost surreal segment in May, Dobbs reporter Casey Wian described the US visit of Mexican President Vicente Fox as a "Mexican military incursion." As Wian spoke, a full-screen graphic appeared, with seven Southwestern states in darker color, portrayed as a map of "Aztlán," a mythical nation of the Aztec people comprising part of the territory Mexico lost to the United States 150 years ago. According to Wian's report, Mexico and "militant Latino activists" secretly aim to take it back. The map was provided by the CCC, which has called blacks "a retrograde species of humanity" and warned that immigration is turning the US population into a "slimy brown mass of glop."

Earlier this year, *Lou Dobbs Tonight* covered a local protest in California against Home Depot's efforts to hire Spanish-speaking workers. Dobbs aired a clip of California Coalition for Immigration Reform spokeswoman Barbara Coe—identified merely as a protester—saying Home Depot had "betray[ed] the American people." Dobbs didn't mention that Coe's coalition is considered a hate group, or that she is a CCC member who's referred to Mexicans as "savages" and, in a speech last year, called undocumented workers "illegal barbarians who are cutting off heads and appendages of blind, white, disabled gringos."

"They're not willing to tell the truth about these groups," says Mark Potok, editor of the SPLC's *Intelligence Report*. Two years ago Potok alerted Dobbs and his staff to the backgrounds of their extremist guests. In response, Dobbs sent five producers and reporters to Montgomery, Alabama, for all-day meetings with the SPLC's hate monitors. "As they left they were promising to do a series on extremism and racism," says Potok. "They never did anything."

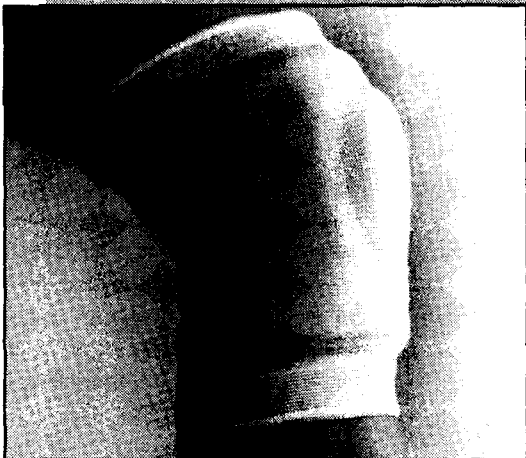
Instead, Dobbs's show continued to showcase extremists—many of whom now hail the anchor as their champion. The Washington-based Center for Immigration Studies, which describes itself as animated by a "low-immigration vision" and whose leaders are frequent guests on Dobbs's show, gave Dobbs its Eugene Katz Award for Excellence in the Coverage of Immigration in 2004. CIS executive director Mark Krikorian praises Dobbs for his "unusual voice among the elite that expresses the widespread public concern over immigration," adding that Dobbs's "conventional business background gives him even more credibility with the general public." Asked if CIS feeds Dobbs material for his show, Krikorian responded: "We used to send him stuff, but since he decided to really take up the issue, he started calling us." (Dobbs himself refused repeated requests for comment.)

Dobbs's Home Depot story exemplified another specialty—

Our Thanks

Research support for these articles on the new American nativism was provided by the Investigative Fund of The Nation Institute. The fund provides research and travel grants for investigative reporting in the independent press.

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showcasing otherwise insignificant anti-immigrant protests to make a particular Dobbsian point. On his nightly newscasts, the small-town border sheriff and his volunteer posse take on the status of war heroes. The Minuteman Civil Defense Corps [see Susy Buchanan and David Holthouse, page 29] becomes a vigorous volunteer border patrol. The woman whose Social Security number was stolen becomes the sympathetic face of hardworking Americans victimized by cheating and conniving immigrants. And right-wing groups calling for a “tourism boycott of Massachusetts” to protest the Kennedy-McCain immigration bill—or, as Dobbs puts it, “Kennedy’s stance on amnesty”—get instant publicity.

These small stories of xenophobic Americans are transformed into vivid, storybook illustrations of Dobbs’s own worldview. Former senior staffers at Dobbs’s show told me the anchor specifically searches for local stories to support his positions. “He approaches stories with a partisan ax to grind,” one former employee told me, asking not to be named out of fear of reprisal. “He runs the place as a tin-horn dictator. He’s assembled correspondents who feel beholden to him. They are given the line on the story and told how to assemble it in his partisan manner before they’re sent out to do the story.” (A second former senior Dobbs staffer, who also declined to speak on the record, confirmed the accuracy of this description.)

That’s led to blatant distortions of key facts. Dobbs searches high and low for statistics showing the negative impact of immigration on the US economy, and he conveniently leaves out contradictory information. In 2003, for example, a reporter on Dobbs’s show announced that the National Academy of Sciences had reported that immigrants cost American taxpayers \$20 billion a year. But the group’s study actually concluded that immigrants add between \$1 billion and \$10 billion to the annual US gross domestic product. (Dobbs later debated the point on his show with Peter Hart, from the watchdog group Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting, who had noted the distortion; Dobbs insisted he was just reading the data differently.)

More recently, Dobbs reported that the much-debated Senate bill would increase immigration by 100 million people over the next twenty years, costing taxpayers some \$54 billion, citing a Heritage Foundation report. But Dobbs didn’t mention that the report has been attacked by independent analysts as wildly overstating the numbers. In another broadcast he cited the right-wing Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) for the statistic that “the net cost of illegal immigration to our economy, including social services, is now roughly \$45 billion annually.” Less partisan experts, such as Wayne Cornelius, say that’s “grossly inaccurate.”

In truth, the evidence is mixed on the impact of illegal immigration on American workers. While there’s evidence that large numbers of illegal immigrants exert a slight downward pressure

on wages in the lowest-paying industries, it’s also clear that the influx of immigrants has expanded the national economy, creating many new jobs. Dobbs is correct that working-class wages have stagnated in recent decades, but most economists blame new technology and the loss of manufacturing jobs, not illegal immigration. As more than 500 independent economists, including five Nobel laureates, declared in an open letter to President Bush and Congress in June, “the gains from immigration outweigh the losses.”

Such reasoned analysis and nuance are not Dobbs’s forte. Dobbs does invite guests he disagrees with on his show—the better to ramp up the drama. But he quickly derides their arguments, scoffs at their data and interrupts their answers. When Janet Murguia, president of the National Council of La Raza, tried explaining how making English the official language of the United States could endanger non-English speakers during a crisis, Dobbs ignored the point and commented: “Implicit in what Janet just said is some suggestion that this is not a warm or welcoming country.” He dismissed that notion by saying that

the United States is “littered with languages [that are] not English.”

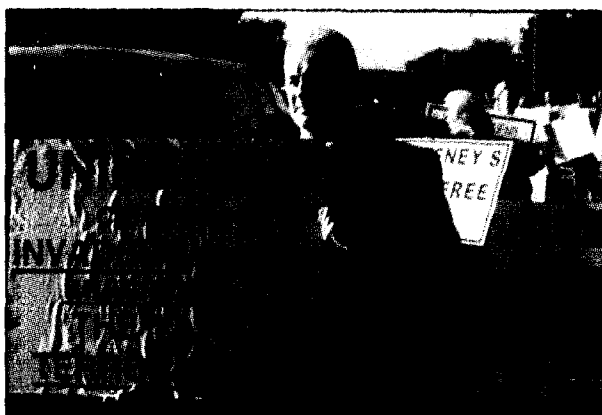
Not surprisingly, after such treatment, many “guests” have refused to appear on his show a second time. Former employees told me that Dobbs’s producers are frequently turned down by reputable experts. One immigration expert I interviewed, who asked not to be named so as to avoid a public feud, said he refused to appear on CNN at all because of Dobbs.

Cornelius was on the show once, but he says he was “hood-

winked” and won’t do it again. “The only part of the interview they used was me saying, ‘Yes, enforcement has collapsed since the early 1990s, and there’s no objective risk of an undocumented immigrant being apprehended at the workplace.’ They left out that the reason is primarily because of the economic disruption it would cause. It’s not just a matter of incompetence; the costs of enforcing the immigration laws to the economy and society generally are too high.” Cornelius had added that strict enforcement wouldn’t eliminate illegal employment, just drive it further underground. But that was all edited out, he says. “It made me look as if I were just another soldier in Lou’s army.”

Angelo Amador, immigration expert for the US Chamber of Commerce, has had similar experiences and now refuses to appear on taped segments. “When it’s taped they use what they want to,” he says. “After I said no, the producer called me back and said they couldn’t get any business groups to go on the show. I wasn’t surprised.”

Still, CNN showcases its popular anchor at every opportunity. In May, when President Bush gave his national speech on immigration reform, CNN watchers heard more from Dobbs than from the President—first on his own show, then on *The Situation Room With Wolf Blitzer*, and later on *Larry King Live* and *Anderson Cooper 360*. “It’s time to cut through the non-



A 'Broken Borders' protester

sense here," Dobbs announced on *The Situation Room*, assuming the grave-yet-contemptuous look he reserves for this issue. "We have a border that is the source of the principal amount of cocaine, heroin, marijuana and meth coming into this country," he proclaimed. "Six thousand National Guardsmen in an adjunct support role is pure cotton-candy nonsense.... We should also be holding the government of Mexico accountable.... They are exporting poverty. They are overcrowding the major schools in Los Angeles. They are creating a crime wave in point of fact in certain parts of the country." (According to experts like Harvard sociologist Robert Sampson, the opposite is true: The nationwide decline in violent crime throughout the 1990s was correlated with a sharp increase in immigration; others have shown that immigrants appear to be less violent than non-immigrants and have the lowest rates of incarceration.)

Dobbs's concerns go far beyond illegal immigration. When he accepted the Katz Award from CIS—after a glowing introduction from Congressman Tom Tancredo, the leading anti-immigration extremist in Washington and a frequent Dobbs guest—he explained that illegal immigration "spans a broad range of fundamental issues that should be of concern to all Americans who are worried about the direction of this country." After noting that the US population has doubled in forty years, Dobbs warned his audience, "We are importing the population growth of other countries, whether it's China or Mexico or any country in the world."

Dobbs's fears about the cultural impact of immigration on the United States apply to Latino American immigrants across the board, legal or illegal. That some sang the national anthem

in Spanish while protesting the Sensenbrenner bill this spring, for example, seemed to hit at the heart of his concerns: What will this nation look like, and sound like, in the future?

That anxiety, fueled in part by demographic studies showing that white Americans will be a minority within the next two decades, may well explain why Dobbs connects with such a large and loyal audience. The anchor takes care not to discuss immigration issues in explicitly racial terms. But he schedules guests on his show to make the demographic point.

After Diane West, a columnist for the conservative *Washington Times*, wrote that the United States would "cease to be a nation" if the Senate's immigration reform bill passed, Dobbs invited her on his show and gave her ample time to elaborate. Projected immigration "has the effect of a demographic tsunami, and it will be mainly Hispanic," West said. "It will be mainly Mexican. And so, what the question becomes is, Do we want to become a northern section of Latin America? Do we cease to become literally an English-speaking people, become bilingual, and/or Spanish-speaking? And with these questions, you really begin to get at the heart of the matter ... a new demographic."

Dobbs prudently eased away from West's "demographic" concern. But not completely. "The issue of multiculturalism, however, and the issue of multi-language," he said. "That becomes a very serious issue, doesn't it?"

For the hundreds of thousands who tune in faithfully to watch Lou Dobbs, securing our "broken borders" may be as much about preserving white American culture as about security or economics. It's a cause white nationalists have long advanced. But it's a new role for television news. ■

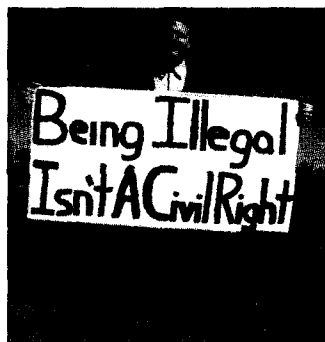
FOR AMERICA'S NEW NATIVISTS, WHAT'S PAST IS PROLOGUE.

Same Old Song

DANIEL TICHENOR

A noted political figure unleashes a blistering attack against new immigrants who "swarm" into our neighborhoods without regard for our laws, customs and shared values. Why, he asks, should we suffer outsiders who prefer ethnic enclaves where they "establish their Language and Manners to the Exclusion of ours?" The painful truth, he adds, is that these newcomers are so culturally different from the rest of us that they will never assimilate like past immigrants, posing a grave threat to the society we cherish.

The latest rant on illegal Mexican immigration by Pat Buchanan or Colorado Congressman Tom Tancredo? No—



the political provocateur was Benjamin Franklin, and his unforgiving pen was aimed at Germans in eighteenth-century Pennsylvania. Franklin was convinced that his home had become "a Colony of Aliens, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of our Anglifying them." Franklin later mellowed on the subject, recognizing the economic benefits of immigration, but we can hear echoes of his original animus toward immigrants in every age of the American

experience.

Over the course of our history, xenophobic opinion has episodically crystallized into formidable nativist movements. Fueled by the economic stresses of working-class Americans, ethnic and racial animosities, security jitters and compelling demagogic leadership, earlier nativist movements underscore the Shakespearean insight that "what's past is prologue."

Daniel Tichenor, author of Dividing Lines: The Politics of Immigration Control in America, is research professor at the Eagleton Institute of Politics and associate professor of political science at Rutgers University.

The first eruption came in reaction to unprecedented rates of Catholic immigration, especially from Ireland, from the 1830s through the 1850s. Anglo-American angst over the Irish Catholic influx, which soared during the Irish potato famine of the 1840s, was exacerbated by competition for jobs and housing in Northeastern cities. Anti-Catholic publications flourished, offering lurid accounts of sinister Roman Catholic crimes and plots that fed Protestant antipathy.

These dark tales spurred mob violence, from the 1834 burning of the Ursuline convent near Boston to the 1844 Bible Riots in Philadelphia, which led to twenty deaths and the destruction of more than 100 Catholic churches, schools and homes. As the ranks of anti-Catholic associations swelled in Seaboard cities, nativist leader Samuel Morse, newspaper editor and future inventor of the telegraph, organized an anti-immigrant party and ran strongly for New York City mayor in 1836. Morse also fed anti-Catholic venom through incendiary writings such as *Foreign Conspiracy* (1835), warning readers that "the evil of immigration brings to these shores illiterate Roman Catholics...the obedient instruments of their more knowing priestly leaders."

Because of the nation's insatiable appetite for immigrant labor—and the clout of Irish voters—nativists made little political headway until the 1850s. In 1849 secret nativist societies formed the Order of the Star Spangled Banner to furtively organize electoral support for an anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant agenda in cities around the country. The movement's rank and file included Anglo-American workers, artisans and small entrepreneurs. Their secrecy led Horace Greeley to mock their members in the *New York Tribune* as "know-nothings"—a label that stuck.

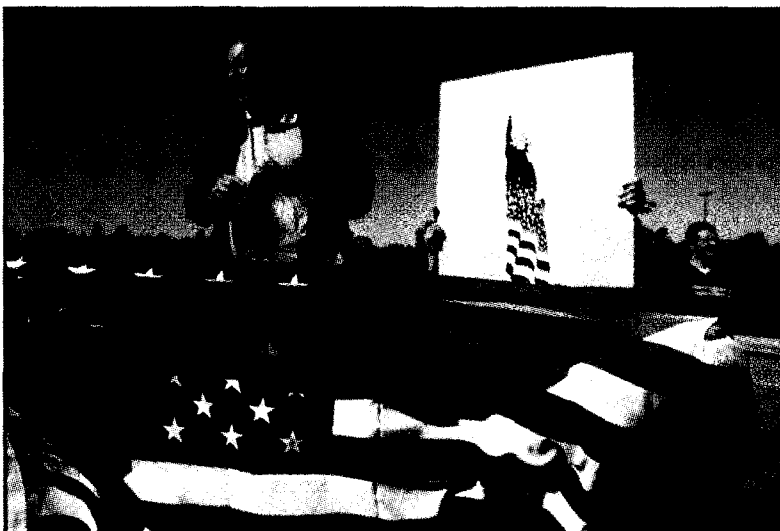
The Know-Nothing movement formed the American Party in the 1850s, devoted to strict limits on immigrant admissions, twenty-one-year waiting periods for citizenship and restrictions on voting rights and officeholding. The party benefited enormously from a political vacuum created by the gradual demise of the Whig Party and balkanization of the Democrats over slavery. In the 1854 and 1855 elections the American Party elected seven Know-Nothing governors, gained control of eight state legislatures and established a strong presence in Congress. In 1856 the Know-Nothings tapped former President Millard Fillmore for the top of their national ticket, and he won 22 percent of the popular vote.

The movement's meteoric rise transcended the ballot box. Know-Nothing candy, tea and other merchandise was successfully marketed. Buses, stagecoaches and clipper ships bore the popular name. But the decline of the American Party was as swift and dramatic as its ascent. Ironically, the same slavery contro-

versy that helped elevate anti-Catholic xenophobia in antebellum America was the driving force behind its rapid demise. The new Republican Party siphoned away nativist voters more devoted to excluding slavery from the territories than to the Know-Nothings' "war to the hilt, on political Romanism." By 1860 the movement had collapsed. To the chagrin of nativists, immigration from Northern and Western Europe flourished in subsequent decades, fueled by federal recruitment efforts, the Homestead Act of 1862 and spreading industrialization. Andrew Carnegie dubbed immigration "a golden stream," a view echoed repeatedly over time by corporate America as it lampooned nativists as economic Luddites.

Chinese immigration of the late nineteenth century was minuscule compared with European inflows—just 4 percent of all immigration at its zenith—but it inspired one of the most brutal and successful nativist movements in US history. From the 1850s through the 1870s, Chinese workers were recruited to California as cheap contract labor for mining, railroad construction, manufacturing and farming. Like Latino immigrants today, they inspired hostility among white workers for allegedly lowering wages and exacerbating working conditions; meanwhile, newspapers and magazines portrayed the Chinese as a race of godless opium addicts, prostitutes and gamblers. California politicians also learned that anti-Chinese speeches and policies translated into votes. The state's first Republican governor, Leland Stanford, promised "to protect free white labor" from the "degraded" Chinese while at the same time his own farming and railroad enterprises employed them.

Economic distress inflamed the Sinophobic movement in the 1870s, when unproductive mines, the completion of the transcontinental railroad and a flood of new settlers to the Pacific Coast led to rampant unemployment. San Francisco union leaders initiated a grassroots network of Chinese Exclusion Leagues that spread across California and the Far West. From 1871 onward, California politicians raced to claim credit for a flood of reforms that included state-level barriers to Chinese entry, segregation laws and special taxes on Chinese businesses. One of the anti-Chinese movement's most effective firebrands was Denis Kearney, an Irish immigrant who blamed Chinese immigrants for his personal failure at mining. His demagogic campaign, which began with race-baiting speeches in the San Francisco sandlots of the late 1870s, drew white laborers into a new Workingmen's Party dedicated to the proposition that "the Chinese must go!" Kearney spurred a state constitutional convention in 1878 targeting the "Chinese menace," as well as an 1879 state referendum that endorsed



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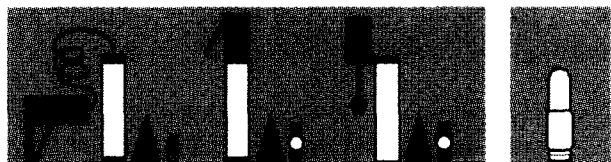
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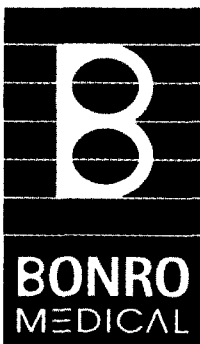
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Chinese exclusion by a remarkable margin: 150,000 to 900.

Fierce party competition in presidential elections of the Gilded Age transformed the anti-Chinese movement into a national political juggernaut. As the *New York Times* queried in 1880, "Which great political party is foolish enough to risk losing the votes of the Pacific States by undertaking to do justice to the Chinese?" Neither, as it turned out. Large bipartisan majorities in Congress suspended Chinese admissions for ten years with passage of the infamous Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Brutal anti-Chinese riots soon followed, as Sino-phobes sought to purge Chinese communities altogether across the Far West. In the 1885 Rock Springs, Wyoming, massacre, twenty-eight Chinese were murdered and every Chinese-owned building, except one, was destroyed. Chinese residents of Tacoma and Seattle suffered looting, arson and violent riots until few remained. The Sinophobic fervor did not subside until the early 1900s; by then, a significantly reduced Chinese population was concentrated in a few self-sufficient Chinatowns.

*Theodore Roosevelt led the charge for
'100% Americanism,' accusing 'hyphenated'
Americans of 'moral treason.'*

As Westerners put their chilling final touches on Chinese exclusion, a new anti-Catholic movement emerged in the nation's heartland in the late 1880s: the American Protective Association. The APA drew its lifeblood from Midwestern and Rocky Mountain communities where Catholics were gaining political and social clout. During the depression of 1893, the ranks of APA faithful surged to more than a half-million. APA rabble-rousers like William "Whiskey Bill" Traynor, a former saloon owner and nativist newspaper publisher, whipped up resentment with speeches blaming Irish Catholic immigrants for the economic crisis.

Although the APA had modest success in electing anti-Catholic Republicans, national party leaders eventually privileged immigrant labor and votes over their nativist agenda. By 1896 William McKinley's presidential campaign actively courted immigrant and Roman Catholic voters while purging the APA from Republican ranks.

As the APA crusade dissipated, a new anti-immigrant movement, led by the upper-class Immigration Restriction League (IRL), the American Federation of Labor and various patriotic societies, distanced itself from anti-Catholic nativism. Embracing the scientific racism of social Darwinism and the eugenics movement, these reformers argued that the real problem was Southern and Eastern Europeans arriving in record numbers from countries like Italy, Greece, Russia, Hungary and Poland—and hereditarily inferior to previous European immigrants. The IRL enjoyed a prominent champion in Massachusetts Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, who proclaimed that new European immigration posed "nothing less than the possibility of a great and perilous change in the very fabric of our race." Progressive Era nativists spurned party politics in favor of mass publicity campaigns, research and full-time Washington lobbying. Their efforts paid dividends when the 1911 Dillingham Commission, led by IRL allies including Lodge, produced forty-two volumes of findings that purportedly vindicated nativist claims about

Southern and Eastern Europeans. But a countermobilization of immigration defenders—led by employer and ethnic groups—yielded a policy stalemate.

The onset of World War I broke the logjam. In 1917 immigration restrictionists seized upon wartime anxieties to win passage of a literacy test for admission into the country. While the IRL and its allies were closing the gates, an Americanization movement attacked any hint of divided loyalties among the foreign-born already here. Theodore Roosevelt led the charge for "100 % Americanism," denouncing "hyphenated" Americans as guilty of no less than "moral treason." Patriotic conformity was pursued by a government-sponsored network of local defense and patriotic associations, including 250,000 badge-wearing volunteers of the American Protective League (APL). German-Americans, celebrated for decades as the model ethnicity, endured the harshest treatment. They

were targets of vandalism, mob violence, surveillance and harassment (by APL watchdogs), job discrimination and arrests for unpatriotic speech. By 1918 public burnings of German books were commonplace, dozens of German-American newspapers and organizations dissolved and some states prohibited speaking German or playing German-composed music in public.

After the war, the immigration restriction movement mobilized for new reforms when the literacy test failed to curb Southern and Eastern European inflows. In 1921 and 1924, during the country's first Red Scare, Congress passed draconian national-origins quotas that slowed Southern and Eastern European immigration to a trickle and barred nearly all Asian admissions. "The day of unalloyed welcome to all peoples, the day of indiscriminate acceptance of all races, has definitely ended," proclaimed Representative Albert Johnson, a chief architect of the legislation.

The early twentieth century was the high-water mark of the American nativist tradition. Sweeping political successes eventually led the IRL to declare victory and disband. The national-origins quota regime they had built assured that few Jewish refugees would escape the Holocaust to the United States, while leaving the back door open to Mexican guestworkers described as "returnable," thanks to a contiguous border. Japanese internment after the attack on Pearl Harbor was an extension of the marriage of racist beliefs and national security imperatives during World War I and the Red Scare.

The infamous national-origins quota system survived until 1965, a testament to the fact that this country's nativist traditions are as durable as its immigrant foundations. More than two centuries after Franklin warned colonial Pennsylvania of German contamination, contemporary demagogues like Pat Buchanan are sounding similar alarms about Mexican newcomers. "Millions of Mexicans have no desire to learn English or become U.S. citizens," Buchanan warns in his book *Death of the West*. "Invading armies go home, immigrant armies do not." It is a familiar refrain in our uneasy nation of immigrants. ■

CHRIS SIMCOX MAINSTREAMED THE MINUTEMEN. NOW HE'D BETTER WATCH HIS BACK.

Locked and Loaded

SUSY BUCHANAN AND DAVID HOLTHOUSE

Duluth, Georgia

Wild Bill's, a cavernous nightclub in the Atlanta suburbs, is usually packed with country-and-western fans on a Saturday night. But the buzzing throng of hundreds on June 24 didn't come to see Keith Urban or LeAnn Rimes. Georgia's GOP Capitol Political Action Committee was hosting "Primary Issues," a concert, barbecue and Republican fundraiser headlined by a different kind of star: celebrity vigilante Chris Simcox, president of the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps (MCDC).

A 43-year-old former gunfight-show actor with an Ichabod Crane physique and a self-image the size of Texas, Simcox is chiefly responsible for touching off the Minuteman movement, a grassroots prairie fire fueled by thinly veiled racism and nativist paranoia. More than anyone, Simcox has promoted the concept that vigilantism is patriotic. His pitch is that armed "citizen border patrols" must do "the job the government refuses to do"—defend America from brown-skinned "invaders."

The message is both simplistic and chilling. It's also a runaway hit. Since the original Minuteman Project in April 2005—a monthlong operation in Arizona that generated massive media hype—more than fifty Minuteman groups have formed around the country. At least 60,000 people (Simcox claims more than 130,000) have sent donations to MCDC that, according to Simcox, exceed \$1.6 million. He further boasts that his 7,451 volunteer *cazamigrantes*, or "migrant hunters," have "personally delivered 13,000 illegal aliens to the Border Patrol."

Simcox's success has been more the product of timing and opportunity than charisma or organizational skills. His haughty leadership style has earned him the nickname "The Little Prince." But as the Republican Party has fractured over immigration,

Simcox has become a hero of the "Build a Wall, Deport 'em All" faction of the GOP. Earlier this year he shed his camouflage fatigues for a suit and tie as a featured panelist at the Conservative Political Action Conference in Washington, DC, the nation's largest gathering of conservative political activists. An increasing portion of his time is spent at fundraisers and forums far from the border he once swore to defend "by any means necessary."

Once dismissed by establishment conservatives as a fringe wacko, Simcox has gained broad right-wing appeal. But in doing so he has alienated many of his original, hard-core followers, whose increasingly vocal allegations of corruption are threaten-

ing to rupture the "action wing" of the anti-immigration movement. The first-generation Minutemen pledged their money, their time and their guns to the old Simcox, a cigar-chomping, shaggy-haired, undiluted extremist who ranted about Aztlan conspiracy theories, issued bizarre reports of Chinese troops on the border and said of Mexican immigrants, "They're trashing their neighborhoods, refusing to assimilate, standing on street corners, jeering at little girls walking on their way to school." The new Simcox, groomed and scripted by neo-conservative political consultants, is a frequent guest on Fox News, where he expresses sympathy for impoverished Mexicans in the same breath that he advocates "enforcement-first" immigration policies.

Simcox's makeover has coincided with the rapid transformation of the MCDC from a ragtag extremist band to a mass-marketing conglomerate run by Diener Consultants, one of the largest fundraising and

political-strategy operations on the right. Along with suspicions about Simcox's personal profiting from Minuteman donations, this mainstreaming of the MCDC has turned several formerly staunch allies against their leader. Paranoid by nature, some in the movement believe that a corporate globalist conspiracy is afoot to co-opt the Minuteman movement, starting with its forefather. "Simcox left the border and went on the cocktail



Susy Buchanan and David Holthouse are staff writers for the Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Report.

speaking circuit,” says longtime anti-immigration activist and former MCDC field team leader Joe McCutchen. “We knew that if April 2005 was a roaring success our enemies would be descending with vigor to cash in and diffuse [sic] our efforts. That is exactly what happened,”

Wild Bill’s is more Budweiser than cocktails, but the scene was typical of the Republican establishment’s broadening embrace of Simcox and the Minuteman movement. Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue, who is up for re-election, worked the room alongside a horde of lesser GOP candidates for state and local office, including Ralph Reed. The odor of pulled pork spread a mighty tang as members of Georgians for Immigration Reduction hawked T-shirts bearing the image of a snarling bald eagle above the slogan “Ill-Eagles Fowl Up My Country!” The crowd warmed up for Simcox by listening to the Right Brothers, a country-rock duo billed as “the Sean Hannity show put to music.” One donned a black sombrero with gold tassels and dedicated a song called “The Illegals” to Chris Simcox. The not-so-catchy chorus: “Tell me why do we allow the illegals? After all they’re illegal. So why do we allow the illegals to keep on coming in?”

As the music faded, Simcox strolled on stage to raucous cheers. America’s top vigilante spoke slowly and with a hint of condescension—almost as if addressing a room full of 5-year-olds. “When you put people in lawn chairs on the border an amazing thing happens,” Simcox said. “No one comes across!” As he spoke, giant screens behind him displayed ghostly night-vision images of immigrants marching through the desert, water jugs piled beneath a mesquite tree and the decomposing corpses of desert-crossers.

Five years ago Simcox was a failed actor, living in Los Angeles, running a private tutoring business. He appeared to suffer a mental breakdown in the days after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, refusing to communicate with anyone unless they first recited the preamble to the US Constitution and leaving a series of bizarre messages on his ex-wife’s answering machine about stockpiling weapons. “I’m going on a great adventure,” Simcox told his son three weeks after the attacks.

Simcox’s great adventure led him to Tombstone, Arizona, where he landed a part in a gunfight show and purchased the *Tombstone Tumbleweed*, a local paper he recast as a weekly anti-immigration screed. In 2002 he founded the Tombstone Militia, described in his paper as “a committee of vigilantes,” which consisted of Simcox and a handful of gun-toting locals. While on patrol in January 2003, Simcox was arrested for illegally carrying a firearm in a national park along the border. Also in his possession were a police scanner and a toy figure of Wyatt Earp riding a horse.

Simcox leapt from local notoriety to national prominence in April 2005, when he teamed with Jim Gilchrist, a retired accountant in Orange County, California, to launch the Minuteman Project. The cannonball media splash that followed attracted the attention of Diener Consultants. The Chicago-based political consulting and fundraising operation is run by Phillip Sheldon,

son of Traditional Values Coalition founder Lou Sheldon, long one of the nation’s most vociferous antigay crusaders. Diener is one cog in Phillip Sheldon’s revenue-generating machine, which also includes Response Unlimited, a direct-mail firm promoted as “the nation’s best and most comprehensive source of mailing lists for conservative and Christian mailers and telemarketers”—and perhaps best known for ghoulishly purchasing a list of donors to Terri Schiavo’s legal fund from her parents several days before her death.

“The modus operandi with Sheldon’s operations is consistently the same,” writes David Neiwert, the investigator and author behind the leading radical-right watchdog blog, Orcinus. “He panders to far-right interests, obtains their membership lists, and then funnels them to other, mostly mainstream right-wing interests. His client list is a virtual Who’s Who of the American right, including the Republican National Committee.” Sheldon’s other business interests include Rightmarch.com PAC—promoted as the right-wing nemesis of MoveOn.org—which shares

an address in Reston, Virginia, with the newly formed Minuteman CDC Political Action Committee.

With Simcox’s blessing, Diener quickly moved sev-

eral employees into key administrative positions within the MCDC and began a slick media and fundraising campaign. Fundraising appeals became aggressive and frequent. A spiffed-up Simcox turned into a cable-news fixture, while full-color ads promoting MCDC and requesting donations began to appear in the conservative *Washington Times*.

The mailing lists Response Unlimited currently offers for sale include the former subscribers to *The Spotlight*, a now-defunct, virulently anti-Semitic magazine published by Holocaust denier Willis Carto. There is also, priced at \$120 per thousand names, a list of 67,000 donors to the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps. Among the thirty-five organizations that have rented the MCDC list so far are former “Ten Commandments Judge” Roy Moore’s failed gubernatorial campaign in Alabama, a group called Stop Puerto Rico Statehood and Oliver North’s Freedom Alliance. “What this all means,” says Neiwert, “is that when someone contributes to the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps, their name and contact information is then given to a whole host of right-wing groups, depending on who’s buying.”

It also means that the formerly grassroots, boots-on-the-border MCDC is now entrenched in the neoconservative Republican establishment. The MCDC’s home page now identifies it as “a project of the Declaration Alliance,” founded in 1996 by Alan Keyes to oppose abortion and gay rights. The Alliance’s president is former Keyes staffer Mary Parker Lewis, also a former “confidential assistant” to William Kristol, editor of the neoconservative *Weekly Standard* and co-founder of the Project for the New American Century. Connie Hair, another former Keyes staffer, now handles MCDC’s media relations as well as those of Diener Consultants.

A growing cadre of hard-core Minuteman supporters are sounding the alarm over MCDC’s partnership with Sheldon.

‘Simcox left the border and went on the cocktail speaking circuit,’ says Joe McCutchen, one of the original Minutemen.

What most disturbs the true believers is the association with neoconservatives like Kristol—the very people anti-immigration extremists blame for covertly supporting illegal immigration as a source of cheap labor. “That a Minuteman Project leader has allowed a marketing group, headed by someone with such close ties to the neo-con movement...to take over and direct the Minuteman activity is troubling, at the very least,” wrote Pennsylvania Minutemen leader John Ryan in a widely distributed June 7 online statement. “I will have nothing to do with an organization that serves as a tool, unwittingly or not, of these globalist slave masters.”

Mike Gaddy, former leader of the New Mexico Minutemen, was one of the first in the movement to suspect Simcox of being a naked emperor. Gaddy, who worked side by side with Simcox during the original Minuteman Project in April 2005, says the intense media coverage flooded the offices of the *Tombstone Tumbleweed* with donations. Two months later, at a meeting of Minuteman leaders, Gaddy “brought up the question of how the monies were being accounted for,” he recalls. “That went over like asking Simcox was he still beating his wife. All of us were then told that the project had been turned over to the Diener group.” Gaddy quit in disgust, and many have followed suit.

Despite the discord, Diener continues to lift MCDC to new heights. By inundating the media with images of Simcox and his volunteers scouring the Sonora desert with binoculars, the consulting firm has made MCDC the premier brand on the suddenly lucrative anti-immigration market. Simcox now drives a shiny new SUV and has moved his operation from the dusty streets of Tombstone to far more upscale digs in Scottsdale. “I suspect that he signed on with the Diener marketing firm because they are moneymakers,” said Liz DeMarco, a former MCDC member and founder of the e-group Americans for Mass Deportation. “He has been, shall we say, handsomely reimbursed for various invoices submitted to Diener, and has an ‘expense account.’ I do not know if he has a salary, but suspect that he must.” (Both Simcox and officials at Diener Consultants declined to answer questions for this story.)

So far, those nagging questions about the sincerity of Simcox’s dedication to the cause—and how much he’s profiting from his formerly gritty movement—have done little to derail the momentum of the Minuteman phenomenon. But DeMarco and others believe that in their eagerness to capitalize on the wild popularity of armed citizen patrols, Simcox and Diener might have fatally overstepped with their latest fundraising effort. The critics are already calling it “Fencegate.”

With characteristic bravura, Chris Simcox chose an appearance on Fox News’s *Hannity & Colmes* to launch his latest campaign—by issuing an ultimatum to President Bush. “Declare a state of emergency and deploy the National Guard and military reserves,” he commanded the President on April 19, 2006, “or by Memorial Day weekend, we’re going to break ground and we’re going to start helping landowners to build a double layer security fence along their properties.”

Fencegate was born. Although Bush did pledge 6,000 National Guard troops to the border on May 15, Simcox continued promoting his plan to turn miles of private land along the border into a North American version of the Gaza Strip. MCDC’s fund-



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raising materials offer impressive diagrams of an "Israeli-style security fence," depicting a six-foot trench and coils of concertina wire backed by a fifteen-foot steel mesh fence. On the other side of the fence, donors are promised, there will be a "60- to 70-foot" graded road, then another fifteen-foot fence and more concertina wire. Video cameras, the fundraising materials claim, will also be installed, for monitoring purposes.

The concept was such a hit among Minuteman supporters that by May 9, spokeswoman Connie Hair was already reporting \$175,000 in donations. On May 27 Simcox presided over a groundbreaking ceremony on a private ranch near Palominas. One hundred and fifty volunteers poured cement and set posts for news cameras, cheered on by Don Goldwater, the Republican anti-immigration hardliner who's challenging Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano in November, and Iowa Republican Steve King, one of the fiercest nativists in Congress. Keyes solemnly addressed the crowd from beneath the brim of a large black cowboy hat. "What we're doing here is not just building a fence," Keyes opined. "We are rebuilding a character. We are redefining a people."

The next day, MCDC announced that fence contributions had jumped to \$380,000 in a little more than a month's time. Buoyed by the response, Simcox recently announced his ultimate fundraising goal for a "70-mile Minuteman border fence" in Arizona: \$55 million.

Thus far, the pace of fundraising is far outstripping the pace of wall-building. By late July the project had managed to erect a few miles of barbed wire attached to metal posts. One former Minuteman volunteer said the fence wouldn't stop a tricycle. Not surprisingly, whispers of dissent within the MCDC are growing louder. "Chris Simcox is collecting massive amounts of money and not routing it out to the Minuteman projects," says Carl Smith, co-founder of the Texas Minutemen. "Volunteers on the border aren't seeing the benefit of donations. Our only question is, Why are folks that mean well and want to contribute still sending money—lots of money—to Chris Simcox when there have been many indications of improper distribution of donations submitted to MCDC? Improper as in, they get as far as Chris Simcox and promptly vanish."

Gauging the validity of these money-pocketing charges is virtually impossible, because MCDC is not registered as a non-profit organization and thus not under the usual requirements of transparency and accountability. Last month Simcox told the *Washington Times* that MCDC had hired an outside auditor who would deliver a public report by November 15.

Unless he is sidelined by scandal, or Fencegate turns into a high-profile fiasco that discredits him in the wider world of anti-immigration politics, Simcox will no doubt continue to step up the tempo of his symbiotic dance with mainstream conservatives and the anti-immigration wing of the GOP. He'll keep trading street cred for money, attention and political clout—and riding the current wave of nativist sentiment as far as it will carry him.

For all his newfound polish, Simcox hasn't entirely lost his connection with the radical fringes of the movement he's helped to mainstream. His old outlandishness still flashes forth on occasion, as it did on July 6 when Simcox addressed the Mississippi Leadership Forum, a conservative civic organization in Jackson. For a few earnest minutes Simcox strayed from his script and the wild-eyed, pistol-packing founder of the Tombstone Militia briefly resurfaced. "The [border] is controlled by Colombian, Mexican and Russian cartels," he told the Mississippians. "These people are well armed and extremely well supplied. They have shoulder-fired rockets. But they will not come through the area that we patrol!"

Yet these days, what really fires up Simcox is something other than nativist paranoia. Delivering his spiel at Wild Bill's on that Saturday night in June, Simcox looked and sounded almost bored by his own message—until he started extemporizing about Arizona Senator John McCain, that is, and how McCain's immigration reform plan amounts to a "shamnesty."

"We need to keep that man away from the White House!" Simcox boomed. The Georgia Republicans cheered and hooted. And when Simcox got carried away enough to declare, "I may just run for his seat in the Senate," their adulation became a roar. ■

LETTERS

C O N T I N U E D

(Continued From Page 2)

not permit a full rundown of their arguments, but here are a couple of questions the stolen-election theorists find difficult to answer:

First, how do they account for the fact that many, if not most, Democratic field volunteers in Ohio—the ones closest to the ground—came away feeling they were out-organized by the Republicans and had no real difficulty believing that Bush had won?

Second, if the election was really stolen, how was it done? Since Ohio's eighty-eight counties all conducted their own mini-elections, and since there was broad statistical consistency in the results across the state, what we're talking about is as many as eighty-eight separate,

coordinated conspiracies. Foul play on such a scale couldn't be achieved with electronic voting machines, because all but a handful of Ohio counties were still using old-fashioned lever machines and punch cards. We're talking about a secret conspiracy involving hundreds if not thousands of people, in a state where the vote was scrutinized like nowhere before. Such a scenario doesn't pass the smell test.

The really shocking lesson of Ohio in 2004 is not that it was an exceptionally dirty election with a singularly aberrant outcome. The lesson is that this is how dirty US elections always are, especially in a close, high-stakes race in a state where one party is in control. The only way to press for meaningful reform is for rank-and-file

Democrats to make common cause with rank-and-file Republicans and rail against a corrupt system. Those who insist on Bush's illegitimacy without the evidence to support such an incendiary allegation merely condemn themselves to marginalization and make it all too easy for a political class uninterested in fair or transparent elections to dismiss the entire reform movement as crackpots.

ANDREW GUMBEL

ZERO CONFUSION

In Andrew Gumbel's July 17/24 "The Coming Ballot Meltdown," the cost of a vote recount in Ohio was reported to have risen from \$100 per precinct to \$500. The cost actually rose from \$10 to \$50.

BOOKS & THE ARTS

Journals of the Purge Years

SHEILA FITZPATRICK

REVOLUTION ON MY MIND: Writing a Diary Under Stalin.By Jochen Hellbeck.
Harvard. 436 pp. \$29.95.

One might expect that diaries of the Stalin period would be the hidden, private place where Russians, pressured into lives of public conformity, recorded their secret thoughts and political doubts. Not so, according to Jochen Hellbeck's fascinating book. Rather than something external and imposed, Soviet Communist ideology should be understood, Hellbeck suggests, "as a ferment working in individuals and producing a great deal of variation as it interacts with the subjective life of a particular person." Far from resisting the regime's demands, these diarists are struggling to embrace, understand and make them their own.

Revolution on My Mind is part of a broader recent trend among young scholars, influenced by Michel Foucault and more directly by Stephen Kotkin, to study the Stalinism of the Soviet 1930s as a civilization in the process of invention. Critical of older social historians' focus on resistance and survival strategies and of their tendency to dismiss ideology as window-dressing (full disclosure: that means me), they aim to bring ideology back to center stage. They do this by way of discourse analysis—that is, close examination of texts, particularly first-person texts like autobiographies, confessions and, in this case, diaries.

Diary-writing was sometimes encouraged in the early Soviet period, as long as the content was not personal and "trivial" (a favorite Soviet pejorative) but focused on something serious like mastery of work skills or personal growth. At the

same time, it was a potentially dangerous pastime, because in the case of arrest—not such an uncommon occurrence in the 1930s—the diary would probably be seized by the NKVD (the secret police) and might become evidence against its author. During the Great Purges of the late 1930s, there were cases (though Hellbeck does not mention them) where individuals went through their old diaries removing, for example, complaints about food shortages and inserting statements of appreciation for Stalin's concern for the people's welfare.

Many diaries were surely burned by their authors in this period; others were destroyed accidentally during the war, and it was not until after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 that Russian archivists and Western scholars started collecting those that remained. The first Western

publication of them was in the 1995 book *Intimacy and Terror*, a collection of extracts from Soviet diaries of the Great Purge years compiled by Véronique Garros and others; two of the diarists from this volume, Stepan Podlubny and Leonid Potemkin, are also the subject of chapters in Hellbeck's book. In 1996 Hellbeck, now an assistant professor of history at Rutgers University, published a German translation of the full Podlubny diary for the 1930s. Since then, he has worked hard locating diaries in collections and private hands in Russia, but the source base he uses in this book is still relatively small: A couple of dozen diaries, many of them literary, are discussed briefly in the early chapters, and four (by Podlubny, Potemkin, Zinaida Denisevskaya and Alexander Afinogenov) are analyzed at length in separate chapters.

Loneliness, worry about social identity (in a society that stigmatized those from an "alien" class background) and anxiety

Sheila Fitzpatrick, the author of *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times* (Oxford), is Bernadotte E. Schmitt Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago.

about living up to the demands of the age (when the sense of historical mission weighed heavily, and heresy and even unintended lapses could be harshly punished) are pervasive themes in these diaries. Hellbeck's central interest is in the diary as a means of self-transformation, and Podlubny's is a prime example.

Podlubny was the son of a kulak (a well-to-do peasant), or rather of a Ukrainian peasant labeled and punished as such by the Soviet regime. After his father's exile to Arkhangelsk, the young Podlubny and his mother moved to Moscow, where they lived an anxious semi-legal life, but he got his foot on the ladder as a student in factory apprenticeship school, as an activist and as a member of the Komsomol (Young Communist League). It was in Moscow that he started to write his diary "for the purposes of my overall development": in other words, to become both a better writer in Russian (his native language was Ukrainian) and a better Soviet citizen. Podlubny's "alien" social origins were not only a practical source of worry to him, since it was always possible that he would be publicly "unmasked" for concealing his kulak father, but also a psychological torment. The diary was his "sole friend," a place to vent his emotions, in contrast to the strict control he needed to maintain in public. However hard he worked, "my successes in production work don't make me happy," he wrote in 1932. "A thought that I can never seem to shake off, that sucks my blood from me like sap from a birch tree, is the question of my psychology. Can it really be that I am different from the others? This question makes my hair stand on end, and I break out in shivers."

Podlubny's activism had an ironic outcome: In 1932 the GPU (as the secret police was called before 1934) recruited him as an informer, giving him the code name "komsomolist," his task being to unmask concealed class enemies—that is, people like himself—among his fellow students. This did not shake his determined embrace of Soviet values, as he saw the secret police, in Hellbeck's words, "as a moral authority, whose vocation was to correct the consciousness of erring individuals and thus restore their shattered psychological health." By 1935 Podlubny was beginning to feel that his project of self-transformation had succeeded. He was accepted into medical school, and the future seemed to open up before him. Yet at the same time he was having "reaction-

ary" thoughts, though he struggled to overcome them. Early in 1936 the long-expected blow fell: Podlubny's kulak origins were revealed, he was expelled from the Komsomol, lost his scholarship to medical school and subsequently dropped out. The rest of the year was so awful that he stopped making diary entries, hoping it could be crossed out "like an unnecessary page" in the history of his life.

But worse was to come: In December 1937, at the height of the Great Purges,

One diarist confessed that the fear of being 'different from the others...makes my hair stand on end, and I break out in shivers.'

his mother was arrested and sentenced to eight years in prison. Podlubny considered his mother's arrest an appalling injustice, and the tone of his diary comments on the Soviet regime turned acid. This was the end of Podlubny's project of self-transformation. But there are several ironic postscripts to the story. In October 1939 Podlubny was sentenced to serve eighteen months in a labor camp, not as a counter-revolutionary or social alien but, more mundanely, as an accomplice in a black-market deal—an aspect of his life on which the earlier diary is completely silent. Podlubny survived, and after the war he made a career as a bureaucrat in the Soviet health administration (on the basis of a false claim to a medical degree, it would appear, though Hellbeck does not spell this out). When Hellbeck made contact with him in Moscow in the early 1990s, Podlubny totally disavowed the striving for self-transformation and the desperate wish to become truly Soviet that dominate several years of his 1930s diary, assuring Hellbeck that the diary was actually—in accordance with the current fashion in Stalin-period reminiscences—a document of Stalinist victimization.

The photograph of Leonid Potemkin on the front cover is a typical "young Soviet worker" portrait of the 1930s, but beneath the obligatory cloth cap his expression is enigmatic and slightly wary. Hellbeck treats him as a *vydvizhenets*, a beneficiary of Soviet affirmative-action programs for young workers and peasants, and indeed Potemkin made the same claim on occasion. But actually he was of white-collar origins, his main contact with the working class being a pre-college year of manual labor whose purpose was probably to give him a "proletarian" coloration and improve his chances of admission. His social origins seem to have

come under suspicion at one point, but the danger passed; in any case, he was never in anything like the vulnerable position of Podlubny. A loner, chronically anxious and self-critical, Potemkin saw himself as a physical and psychological weakling who must "retrain myself from one who is cold, morose, and inconspicuous in society into one who is quick in his wit and actions, healthy, an activist and leader with a strong character." The diary was part of his self-training regime, but interestingly enough, he also visited a "neuropathologist" who told him that his parents were to blame for his weak nerves (an unexpected Freudian echo in the distant Urals) and prescribed exercise and a tonic.

Potemkin, like Podlubny, made a success of his later life and put the psychological uncertainties of his youth behind him, as Hellbeck discovered when he tracked Potemkin down in the 1990s. Alexander Afinogenov, by contrast, had had a smashing success as a proletarian writer ("proletarian" referring to his political alignment, not his actual social origins) with his first play, *Fear*—a prescient title, as it turned out—and was riding high in the 1930s as a fully paid-up member of the new Communist elite, an occasional interlocutor of Stalin, a proud owner of a Ford motorcar and the husband of Jenny (an American ballerina), who vacationed at the best Black Sea resorts and weekendened at his dacha in Peredelkino, an elite writers' colony. In Afinogenov's play, fear was something that afflicted only the psychologically crippled bourgeois intelligentsia, while their young proletarian contemporaries strode forward fearlessly into the future. But fear came to Afinogenov, too, when, in the spring of 1937, he was denounced as an enemy of the people, along with two of his closest associates from the proletarian writers' group. The other two (Leopold Averbakh and Vladimir Kirshon) were arrested and shot, while Afinogenov—abjectly confessing his infection with the "poisonous disease that goes by the name of 'Averbakh leprosy'" and decisively repudiating his "diseased" former self—was expelled from the party but for some reason not arrested. For seven or eight agonizing months he was left hanging in the wind, shunned by former friends and holed up in his dacha with Jenny and their baby. The diary Hellbeck analyzes was written at this time.

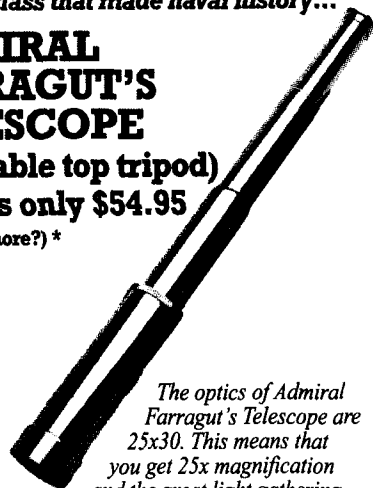
It had always been Afinogenov's practice to use his diary as a writer's sketchbook; he would even cut it up with scissors

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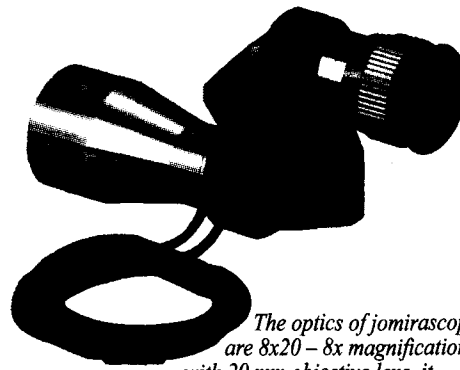
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and arrange the pieces thematically. The diary for December 1934–late 1937 was an exception; it was kept intact as a kind of draft for a quasi-autobiographical novel, *Three Years*, which was to tell the story of the protagonist's corruption, spiritual crisis and rebirth. There was a question, however, about whom his readers were going to be: If he survived to write the book, the Soviet public; if not, and he was arrested, only the secret police—which, under the circumstances, was perhaps the most important reader his diary could have had. This possibility of seizure by the NKVD obviously put into question the credibility of the diary as a personal statement, but Afinogenov anticipated this objection. In his novel, he has the protagonist—his autobiographical surrogate—tell his police interrogator about the diary in which he made notes on his “personal growth and development.” You won’t believe any of this, of course, the surrogate says to his interrogator; you will think that “once a person is waiting to be arrested and starts keeping notes, it’s clear...that he’s keeping them for the future reader, the interrogator, and that means that he’s embellishing everything as much as he can, in order to prove his innocence.” But then, in a skillful sleight of hand, Afinogenov turns this on its head: The fact that I know you know I know you will be reading this means that I am not writing this for you. Having foreseen the NKVD’s skepticism, he claims, he is able to liberate himself from its shadowy presence as a reader and write his diary, once again, for himself.

Afinogenov’s diary revels in the self-cleansing that the accusations against him had provoked and vows to give up his pleasure-seeking way of life. Sometimes he even refers to himself in the third person as “the degenerate playwright Afinogenov.” There are moments, to be sure, when his resolve breaks down and he writes of himself as the innocent victim of a “devilish” fascist conspiracy “to annihilate talented Soviet artists,” but the dominant mode is an exalted acceptance that the ordinary reader might find hard to take. The NKVD reader, however, was another matter, and it is clear that Afinogenov, for all his protests, had him in mind when he wrote, for example: “Over there, at the Lubianka, the people are intelligent. Despite their busy schedules and the insane amount of work, they see down to the roots of everything... and no wave will force them to arrest an innocent person.” Remarkably, Afinogenov survived this ordeal and was reinstated as a party member early in 1938, becoming yet more passionate in his adoration of

Stalin and celebrating the purge that had made him “a better and purer person,” as well as a tougher one. He died in a German bombing raid on Moscow on October 29, 1941, supposedly while visiting the headquarters of the party Central Committee building (though this seems almost too poetically apt to be true).

Hellbeck’s analysis of his diarists is first-rate, and his enthusiasm for his subject is infectious. Of course, his selection of diaries is tailored to fit his thesis about Soviet citizens’ zeal for self-transformation and mastery of the Soviet worldview: There is little room here for Nina Lugovskaya’s adolescent alienation (*Diary of a Soviet Schoolgirl*, 2003), Lyubov Shaporina’s hysterical diatribes against the Soviet regime or the ex-convict Andrei Arzhilovsky’s critical detachment (both from *Intimacy and Ter-*

ror). But selectivity can be accepted as an author’s prerogative when the analysis is as fresh and interesting as Hellbeck’s. This book helps us to understand a particular Soviet mindset of the 1930s; and regardless of whether this mindset was typical (a claim the author does not explicitly make) or exceptional, it suggests an intriguing way of understanding the over-the-top enthusiasm that the Soviet regime inspired among some of its citizens in the 1930s. A commonsense assumption (shared, incidentally, by Stalin) would be that the terror and stigmatization characteristic of this period created enemies for the Soviet regime. But what if the opposite were true as well: Namely, that the threat of exclusion generated in at least some of its victims a longing to belong that made them particularly passionate enthusiasts for Stalinism? ■

The Prison Notebooks

RONALD GRIGOR SUNY

PHILOSOPHICAL ARABESQUES.

By Nikolai Bukharin. Translated by Renfrey Clarke. Monthly Review. 407 pp. \$49.95.

Some revolutionaries are especially attractive to nonrevolutionaries. They are the ones you are likely to find on a T-shirt: usually the losers in the struggle for power; often romantically handsome, like Che Guevara; vulnerable and tough at the same time; and often a martyr, like Leon Trotsky, the victim of the demon dictator. Neither very long in power nor burdened by responsibility for the worst atrocities, they allow us to imagine alternatives to the revolution’s fall from grace. Nikolai Bukharin belongs in this company, though the hip clothes merchants have yet to discover him. He was the good Bolshevik, loved by his comrades and the Soviet public, “the darling of the party” according to Lenin. More tenderhearted than his onetime collaborator Joseph Stalin, Bukharin pleaded in the mid-1920s with police chief Felix Dzerzhinsky that the time had come to give up the harsh methods associated with the bloody civil war of a few years past. He protected certain vulnerable cultural figures, like the poet Osip Mandelstam, and fought to preserve the moderate pro-peasant policies that Stalin eliminated in the forced collectivization. Bukharin too was a martyr to his beliefs as well as a victim of his weaknesses. Revolution is a rough business, and survival requires a particular kind of fitness. Those striving to emancipate often cannot stand up to those with more prosaic political goals, like staying in power at any cost. Bukharin’s story deserves more than a T-shirt—a play, perhaps, even better a novel or movie.

Born to Moscow schoolteachers in 1888, Bukharin joined the revolutionary movement as a young man in the heat of 1905, aligning himself the next year with the Bolsheviks. His career was linked to his home city, and after prison and exile, he was involved in the seizure of power in the old capital in 1917. Close to Lenin personally, he nevertheless had serious differences with the Bolshevik leader on theoretical questions of imperialism and the nature of the state, as well as on strategy, in the first year of Soviet government. Bukharin was a leader of the Left Communists, who opposed Lenin’s treaty with the Germans, which removed Russia from World War I. The Left called for a revolutionary war against German imperialism, a risky, even foolish (if principled) policy that would have cost

Ronald Grigor Suny, Charles Tilly Collegiate Professor of Social and Political History at the University of Michigan, is the editor of the forthcoming Cambridge History of Russia: The Twentieth Century.



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the Bolsheviks territory and possibly their hold on power. An enthusiastic supporter of the radical program of the Soviets during the civil war (1918–21), known afterward as War Communism, Bukharin later became the major promoter of its reversal in Lenin's New Economic Policy (1921–28). He favored the *smychka*, the unity of the peasants and workers symbolized by the hammer and sickle, which was officially promoted for six years when the state conceded control over much of the agricultural economy to the peasants. He allied himself with Stalin, then a party centrist, in his opposition to Trotsky's more radical approach to industrialization, which entailed heavier taxes and pressure on the peasantry.

Bukharin and Stalin enjoyed a few years of unprecedented economic success in the mid-1920s, when the battered Soviet economy grew steadily if slowly. As his biographer, Stephen F. Cohen, has argued,

Bukharin was in those years a far more influential member of the party than Trotsky, whose defeat earlier in the decade had marginalized the fiery orator to a role of permanent oppositionist. But by 1927 it was evident to all the leaders that the pro-peasant policy could no longer satisfy growing peasant demand, given the meager and high-priced industrial goods available. Bukharin agreed to increased financial pressure on the peasants but within the general contours of the New Economic Policy. Stalin, however, turned abruptly toward a far more coercive program reminiscent of civil war tactics—forced requisitioning of grain from the peasant villages, removal of the well-to-do peasants, the so-called kulaks, and armed suppression of all resistance. Bukharin tried reason and persuasion to stop Stalin, and even made a futile and foolish attempt to ally with other oppositionists, but the wily Georgian al-

ready controlled the levers of power and was able to portray Bukharin and company as a deviant "Right Opposition."

In 1929 Bukharin was removed from the Politburo and lost his chairmanship of the Comintern. For the next decade he was at the mercy of Stalin, who played an elaborate cat-and-mouse game with him, at times feigning friendship by allowing him to edit the government's newspaper, *Izvestia*, work on the 1936 "Stalin Constitution" and travel abroad on a mission to buy the Marx archive. Bukharin had his sympathizers in the party, but few dared to stand up to Stalin now that he had consolidated his hold on the party/state. Even the "president" of the Soviet Union, the old Bolshevik Mikhail Kalinin, told Bukharin privately: "You, Nikolai Ivanovich, are 200 percent right, but there is nothing more effective than a monolithic party. We have missed our chance, Stalin has too much power.... The rest you understand yourself." One by one Bukharin's supporters were dismissed from their positions. Some were arrested and forced to implicate Bukharin in various anti-Soviet activities. Bukharin knew Stalin well enough to realize that his life was hanging by a thread; yet his *joie de vivre* kept him afloat. And in his last years he found a young woman with whom to share his joys and sorrows.

A Letter From 18 Writers

including three Nobel Prize recipients

The latest chapter of the conflict between Israel and Palestine began when Israeli forces abducted two civilians, a doctor and his brother, from Gaza. An incident scarcely reported anywhere, except in the Turkish press. The following day the Palestinians took an Israeli soldier prisoner—and proposed a negotiated exchange against prisoners taken by the Israelis—there are approximately 10,000 in Israeli jails.

That this "kidnapping" was considered an outrage, whereas the illegal military occupation of the West Bank and the systematic appropriation of its natural resources—most particularly that of water—by the Israeli Defense (!) Forces is considered a regrettable but realistic fact of life, is typical of the double standards repeatedly employed by the West in face of what has befallen the Palestinians, on the land allotted to them by international agreements, during the last seventy years.

Today outrage follows outrage; makeshift missiles cross sophisticated ones. The latter usually find their target situated where the disinherited and crowded poor live, waiting for what was once called Justice. Both categories of missile rip bodies apart horribly—who but field commanders can forget this for a moment?

Each provocation and counter-provocation is contested and preached over. But the subsequent arguments, accusations and vows, all serve as a distraction in order to divert world attention from a long-term military, economic and geographic practice whose political aim is nothing less than the liquidation of the Palestinian nation.

This has to be said loud and clear, for the practice, only half declared and often covert, is advancing fast these days, and, in our opinion, it must be unceasingly and eternally recognized for what it is and resisted.

PS: As Juliano Mer Khamis, director of the documentary film *Arna's Children*, asked: "Who is going to paint the 'Guernica' of Lebanon?"

John Berger	Noam Chomsky
Harold Pinter	José Saramago
Eduardo Galeano	Arundhati Roy
Naomi Klein	Howard Zinn
Charles Glass	Richard Falk
Gore Vidal	Russell Banks
Thomas Keneally	Chris Abani
Carolyn Forché	Martín Espada
Jessica Hagedorn	Toni Morrison

This letter has been printed in newspapers throughout the world, including Le Monde, El País, The Independent and La Repubblica.

Anna Larina was the daughter of a distinguished old revolutionary, Iurii Larin, a close friend of Bukharin's. She had known Bukharin from girlhood and eventually fell in love with him. They married in 1934, when Bukharin was already in disgrace. Stalin phoned him "in the dead of night," and when Larina picked up the phone, he barked: "Stalin. Call Nikolai." "More trouble again," Bukharin told his bride as he took the receiver. But Stalin was in a good mood. "Nikolai, I congratulate you! You outspit me this time, too!" "How?" asked Bukharin. "A good wife, a beautiful wife, a young one...younger than my Nadya!" Stalin answered. Nadya, of course, was Stalin's late wife, Nadezhda Allilueva, who had killed herself two years earlier after a quarrel with her husband. Bukharin and Allilueva had been friends and confidants, and Stalin had bitterly demonstrated his jealousy when he discovered the two walking alone in the dictator's dacha in Zubalovo. As Larina tells the story in her memoirs, Stalin "crept up stealthily behind them. When they turned in surprise, he looked Nikolai Ivanovich straight in the face and uttered a terrible threat: 'I'll kill you.'" Bukharin took it as a crude joke, but Allilueva shuddered and turned pale.

As late as the spring of 1935, Stalin encouraged Bukharin to think of him as a friend. At a banquet for military graduates, he proposed a toast to Bukharin: "Let bygones be bygones." Yet at the various show trials of top Soviet leaders in 1936 and 1937—personally orchestrated, as we now know, by Stalin—accusations were made against Bukharin. The noose was tightening. Bukharin pleaded, protested and went on a near-fatal hunger strike. But this tactic backfired, weakening him when he was called before the Central Committee to defend himself. Larina accompanied him through a raging snowstorm to that fateful confrontation. We have the full transcript of the extraordinary session at which Bukharin desperately tried to defend himself under the shouts and scoffs of his former comrades. He was accused of treason and arrested on February 27, 1937. He spent the last year of his life in Lubyanka prison, where his interrogators prepared him for the third of the great show trials, the one that would link Bukharin as a conspirator with Trotskyites and fascists in plots against Stalin. It was in the final twelve months of his life, in the infamous Lubyanka, after hours of questioning, that he wrote his last manuscripts and letters.

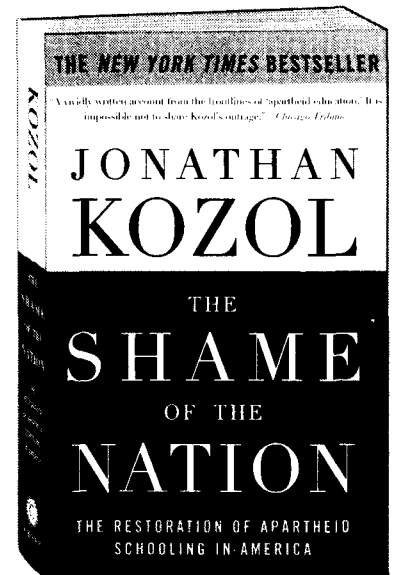
Forty-nine years old, a condemned man, Bukharin remained ever the intellectual, full of fire and fight for his youthful ideals even as his spirit and life's work were under assault. He worked on four book-length manuscripts, writing by hand, mining a lifetime of memories and knowledge, along with the few books permitted him. He poured out a cycle of almost 200 poems and a long autobiographical novel, *Vremena* (Times), which, though unfinished, was translated and published in 1998 by Columbia University Press under the title *How It All Began*. The first work he completed (in four weeks)—*Socialism and Its Culture*, an investigation of the current "crisis" in Europe employing the tools of Marxist analysis—would have been familiar to his party comrades. Such studies were standard at party meetings and congresses, sociological settings of "the current moment" with the requisite strategic propositions to which such an analysis would lead. "For Bukharin," Cohen says, "'culture' meant modern civilization; fascism was its mortal crisis and socialism its only possible salvation." Against all odds, Bukharin argued for a restoration of the humanist and democratic potential of the Soviet system, which would stand as the principal bulwark against fascist barbarism.

His penultimate work was a philosophi-

cal treatise of the sort that only a few Bolshevik theorists could have attempted. Bukharin once again would demonstrate that he had a major contribution to make to the Soviet experiment: if not in politics, where Stalin had easily outplayed him, then in the development of theory, where Stalin was not even in the game. Alone in his cell, Bukharin took up issues and arguments that he had explored in his 1921 masterwork, *Historical Materialism*, a text that became for a decade required reading for all aspiring Communist theorists at home and abroad. Widely recognized at the time as a major thinker on questions of epistemology and the philosophy of science, Bukharin privately had to live with his mentor Lenin's critical remark at the end of his life that Bukharin "has never studied and, I think, never fully understood dialectics." *Philosophical Arabesques* was Bukharin's respectful reply to Lenin, at once a defense of Leninist orthodoxy on ontological and epistemological issues and a challenge to the petrified official Marxism of the Stalinists. He believed that what he was doing was extremely valuable and wrote to his wife, "The most important thing is that the philosophical work not be lost. I worked on it for a long time and put a great deal into it; it is a very mature work in comparison to my earlier writings, and, in contrast to them, dialectical from beginning to end."

Dialectics is a tricky business. It was part of a time when thinking and working toward alternative futures was all the rage. In our anti-utopian world, when common sense, pragmatic politics and adjusting to the way things are have displaced dreams and schemes of social engineering, not to mention social justice, the grand claims that were made in the name of dialectics—as a scientific method, a theory of knowledge and a conclusive description of the way history, society and even nature move—appear nonsensical. Yet for centuries the term in its various meanings possessed a power that when deployed skillfully in polemics might demolish an opponent's arguments. Dialectics referred to the relationship between an external, objective "real world" and human activity's creative interaction with it, the idea that human beings are both shaped by and shape their environment. Marx took from Hegel the concept of negation, that everything carries within it the conditions of its own disappearance, and a hundred years ago Marxists were obsessed with the Hegelian triad of dialectics: the transformation of quantity into quality, the interpenetration of opposites and the negation of the negation. Dialectics was also used to refer to the interconnectivity

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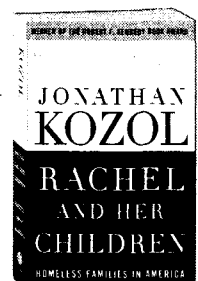
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of phenomena, mutual interdependence or "the unity of opposites," in one of Lenin's favorite phrases.

Contradiction is central to dialectics. Dialectical thinking refers to an awareness of the deeper essences that lie behind mere appearances. In other words, to be dialectical is to recognize that the world is in process, is ever-changing, to see the existing phenomenal state of things in flux. Evolution is a dialectical theory when it includes not just gradual change but leaps and eruptions. Since in dialectics the only thing permanent is change, a dialectical politics requires flexibility, not simple deduction from first principles but creative responses to new circumstances. It proposes not confusing the present with the future.

With such a vague and multivocal term, it is no wonder that Bukharin struggled so hard to prove that he was no vulgar materialist but had grasped the elusive dialectic. The difficulty of the dialectic for Marxists, however, was that even as they clung tightly to their materialism they might have moved too far in the direction of Hegelian idealism. Bukharin began his philosophical investigations with an attack on the "vulgar empiricists," whom he accused of being metaphysical in divorcing "sensation from understanding, feeling from thought." This is crudely anti-dialectical, he asserted. In a classically Marxist approach, he stated that ideas, like language, are "social products." An individual experiences sensations, but "only a socialized human being thinks." He then went on to reject the view of those he called "solipsists," who believe everything is in the individual mind, that the external world is only a mental product and can only be known through sensations. The real world, Bukharin claimed, exists and forces its existence on the human subject.

The philosophical issues that animated Marxists for much of the first half of the twentieth century were never considered by them to be purely contemplative or speculative; they were tied to politics. Knowledge and political practice were inseparable. To think of the observable world as simply a product of mind or the senses, rather than objective and real, was intolerable. Such cognitivist views were as threatening to activists like Lenin as postmodernism is to many today. Developments in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century physics, like the electromagnetic theory, relativity and quantum theories, opened a new front in the philosophical wars between materialists and idealists. Traditional understandings of matter as permanent, hard, impenetrable and inert were disrupt-

ed. Philosophers no longer saw matter as "material"; in the words of Bertrand Russell, "Matter has become a mere ghost."

While accepting the new physics that seemed to confirm the fluidity of nature, Lenin resisted the shift among philosophers who seemed to posit a new idealism that saw the external world as a product of mind. When he discovered that such thinking attracted members of the Bolshevik faction, like Alexander Bogdanov (1873–1928), Lenin wrote a philosophical manifesto, *Materialism and Empirio-criticism* (1909), in which he argued not only that we know the world through our senses but that our perceptions correctly and accurately reflect the objective external world. Lenin would not accept that since humans can perceive and know only through sensations, there is no independent, nonsubjective way to verify the existence of the external world. As a great simplifier, the leader of the Bolsheviks liked dichotomies—idealists versus materialists, faith versus science, the bourgeoisie versus the proletariat, true revolutionaries versus opportunists—and considered Bogdanov and his followers idealist deviants. Like Bukharin, Lenin too had to deal with an accusation—this one from his mentor, Georgii Plekhanov, the father of Russian Marxism—that he was "organically incapable of dialectical thinking."

Deeply embedded in political struggles that sapped his physical strength and mental energy, Lenin was always partisan, in philosophy as well as politics and political economy. And in this way, as well as others, Bukharin was a Leninist: A philosopher's views were never simply neutral but were engaged in the political and social conflicts of the time. But Bukharin was very scrupulous about the philosophical issues at hand—an intellectual proclivity that was not always esteemed by his fellow revolutionaries. Trotsky, who was almost invariably on the opposite side of most issues from Bukharin, wrote critically that his rival was "inclined toward professorial ways in distinction from Lenin, for whom the structure of a composition was determined by its political or polemical interest." More professorial, perhaps, but Bukharin echoed Marx's critique of earlier philosophers that the external world is not simply there to be contemplated but is the object of practical action. Philosophers were to change the world. Like Lenin, Bukharin rejected the view put forth by the Austrian physicist and philosopher Ernst Mach (1838–1916) that science, even as it strives to eliminate all metaphysical and faith-based assumptions, must limit its investigations to phenomena perceivable by the senses. For Mach sci-

tific categories were human constructions, conventions through which humans understand the world, rather than an accurate picture of an underlying reality. Lenin considered Mach and Bogdanov (incorrectly) to be idealists who claimed that physical objects were fictions and that only sense data were real. Bukharin followed Lenin, forgetting his earlier infatuation with Bogdanov's views, and in *Philosophical Arabesques* he proposed the completely "orthodox" view that scientific categories "are in no sense conventional signs, labels selected arbitrarily for the purpose of distinguishing between things." Like Lenin, he regarded concepts not as conventions or mental constructions but as "representations of objective characteristics, qualities, relationships, and laws of things and of real processes."

In this last philosophical work, as well as in earlier treatises, Bukharin set out as his principal task the defense of Marxist historical materialism as a science. Convinced of the connection between knowledge and the social world, Bukharin shared Marx's notion of science as the investigation and discovery of the complex of social laws that determine the evolution of the human species, human society and thought. For Marx society was natural, and human nature could not be separated from society. Human evolution was the product of the structure of society through time as well as human action on nature and society. Bukharin subscribed to and elaborated on this "sociology of thought" through application of a "materialist dialectics" that examined "the historical process of its rise and development...above all in relation to practice, to labor. Like language, thought itself...is a social product."

In line with Lenin, Bukharin held to a materialist ontology and a realist epistemology. Things are knowable; they have objective properties and exist in the real world. They are apprehended by human beings subjectively through their relations with the real world. But sensory knowledge of nature is only the starting point; thought itself contributes to cognition and creates something new, a "new alloy" from the original sensations. Here dialectics involves the objective reality of the external world and the subjective apprehension by humans. Thought, however, should not be considered simply "innate ideas," Kantian a priori categories or pure Platonic concepts accessible only to the mind, but rather the product of millennia of experience. Cognitive raw material is reworked, transformed, as people "do not only taste and sniff; they also think, and work, and

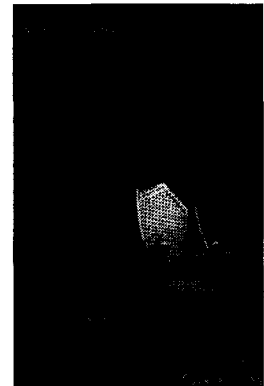
act jointly." Science comes in and adds to our knowledge and understanding, and humans create "abstractions, concepts, laws, a scientific picture of the world." Bukharin here is making an important distinction between ideas that are produced simply by physical and chemical processes in the brain, responses to the external world through sensations, and ideas determined by social conditions, which in turn are shaped by humans.

Like other Marxists—and social theorists more generally—Bukharin struggled with the weight of given historical and material structures and the range of human activity that might change them. Men and women in Marx's view and in Bukharin's *Philosophical Arabesques* are both flesh and spirit, body and mind. They are not simply made by circumstances but also make their circumstances. One had to respect the dialectical laws of society and nature but avoid the pitfalls of determinism or fatalism. It was still people who made history.

For all the importance Bukharin ascribed to it, his effort to bring together Hegelian dialectics and empirical social science, to go beyond the surface appearances of phenomena to the laws and regularities that move humans and their society, remains a document of its time. Present-day philosophers concerned with the precision of language or social scientists who stay close to their empirical findings, statistical probabilities, rationalist explanations or game theoretic models may find the book a historical curiosity. Even social theorists, who struggle in their own way with the specter of Marx, are more likely to engage with Western Marxist thinkers like Georg Lukács or Antonio Gramsci, or with French poststructuralists like Michel Foucault or Pierre Bourdieu, than turn back to Bukharin. Yet Bukharin's engagement with dialectics as a method—his focus on change and contradiction, on overcoming historically generated social institutions and intellectual practices that have taken on the appearance of natural, fixed, permanent realities—may have an unrecognized relevance more than ever in our one-dimensional present. A politics without a sense of new possibilities circles around itself endlessly.

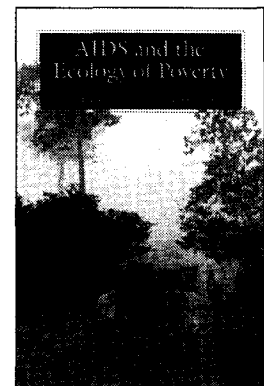
Bukharin's tragedy did not end with his last writings or his pathetic pleas to "Dear Koba" to save his life. There was a coda to his career, half a century after his execution. During the years of Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost*, Bukharin's ghost haunted the halls of the Kremlin as the superannuated "men of the '60s" tried to

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think their way out of the Stalinist system they were determined to reform. Not only were his widow's efforts to have Bukharin exonerated and posthumously restored to party membership vindicated; a short, intensive revival of interest in this fallen opponent of Stalinism gripped the Soviet public. Scholars in the West had long discussed whether Bukharin's moderate policies toward the peasants and continuation of Lenin's New Economic Policy were a viable alternative to Stalin's ferocious war on the peasantry. For a brief time Gorbachev's talk about a market socialism, as well as his personal interest in Bukharin (he read the Russian translation of Cohen's biography), seemed to some to promise a more tolerant, democratic, participatory socialism along the lines envisioned by

Bukharin. Perhaps out of the contradictions of an authoritarian, oligarchic state structure, a decaying command economy and a desiccated official ideology in which fewer and fewer believed, a genuine socialism would somehow emerge... dialectically! But once again forces larger than individual leaders and the unintended consequences of "revolutions from above" overwhelmed the gradualist reformers. As in the late 1920s, men in the late 1980s tried to make their own history but could neither choose the conditions in which they were acting nor ultimately control the will of powerful individuals determined to tear down what had so painfully been built. The only future those who brought down the Soviet Union could imagine was the present they saw in the West. ■

FILMS

The Magic Bus

STUART KLAWANS

**LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE • QUINCEAÑERA • MY COUNTRY, MY COUNTRY •
THE PUSHER TRILOGY • THE BRIDESMAID**

The bus explains everything, even though no one pauses to explain the bus. It's a yellow Volkswagen of 1960s vintage, which can't be the original property of paterfamilias Rich (Greg Kinnear) or suburban mom Sheryl (Toni Collette), since neither is old enough—although they do seem to be plunging

more desperately into their 40s, right before your eyes. Entrepreneurial platitudes filter through his forced grin; her glance has the wariness of a secret smoker. No, these people wouldn't have bought the hippiemobile used, either. This gear-grinding relic must belong to Grandpa (Alan Arkin), whose raunchy candor, leather vest and fanny-pack stash of heroin make him the Hoover family's resident Walt Whitman.

Not that Whitman ever pops up among the literary references. Nietzsche is a strong presence—the Hoovers' eerie son, Dwayne (Paul Dano), reads him continually and has decorated his bedroom with a colossal drawing of the Great Mustache—and Proust also figures prominently. (Sheryl's brother Frank—Steve Carell—has taught Proust at a university, though more recently he's been engaged in blowing his job and slashing his wrists, so that he's wound up bunking with Dwayne.) But just as ownership of the bus may be tacitly understood—as things often are when a movie is good—so too may Whitman, though un-

cited, chant his "Song of the Open Road" all through *Little Miss Sunshine*, the best American comedy since *Bad Santa*.

Little Miss Sunshine is the story of the Hoovers' trip in the Volkswagen bus from Albuquerque to Redondo Beach, California, where their 8-year-old daughter, Olive (Abigail Breslin), is determined to compete in a children's beauty pageant. Being one of those rare movie families who touch on reality—they're pinched enough to set a \$4 per head limit when breakfasting at a diner—the Hoovers cannot afford to fly to the pageant, nor can they in good conscience leave behind any of their number, however much they'd like to separate. So, for all of them, it's into the cheap and capacious Volkswagen, symbol of freedoms as presumably outmoded as Grandpa's wardrobe, to ride down a road marked Carefree Highway in pursuit not of happiness but confirmation that Olive is a winner. In Rich's horrifying, MBA version of Nietzsche, this is necessary proof that his daughter is not a loser.

Little Miss Sunshine cannily introduces you to this situation through Frank's numbed but intelligent eyes. Heavily bearded and gaunt, he sits at the quiet, still point amid the Hoovers' dinner-table hubbub, patiently observing the hell to which he's consigned himself. Not quite hell: In the previous scene you saw him picked up at the hospital, where his sister's love came through to him (and you) thanks to the warmth and conviction of Collette's performance. The first family bond is already established. As the road trip proceeds, more alliances will form: between Frank and silent, wax-faced Dwayne; between Dwayne and his mother (without her even knowing); and, most surprising of all, between Grandpa and his son Rich. Though they seem at first to be fighting for the soul of little Olive, Mr. Natural and Mr. Man ultimately collaborate in freeing this chubby, bespectacled, guileless kid who wants so much to be a winner.

Directed by Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris (making their feature debut after many music videos), with a screenplay by another splendid first-timer, Michael Arndt, *Little Miss Sunshine* bursts with raucous ensemble scenes, edited so that the actors are set loose, with their dialogue and sight gags flowing in swift crosscurrents. There's even a good running joke—literally running, since it involves the need for strenuous group effort to start the bus without recourse to first gear. All that's missing, I think, is a willingness to let reprobate characters remain unredeemed. That's why *Little Miss Sunshine* maybe falls short of *Bad Santa*. There ought to be stench in the movie—again literally, because the plot demands it—yet nothing that stinks of the incurable is allowed to intrude.

But since this film giddily oversteps all other bounds of decorum, up to the edge of child pornography, I won't complain about the happy ending. As *Little Miss Sunshine* teaches, the world is full of competition, in which the vast majority of us fall short. But we losers still get to sing on Whitman's open road, and even dance together if we feel like it. The track? It's got to be "Super Freak."

A few smiles, a few tears and a whole barrel of local color: The essential ingredients for Sundance-style filmmaking are fully in evidence in the lovely and lovable *Quinceañera*. Written and directed by Richard Glatzer and Wash Westmoreland, with the inspiration and evident support of their Mexican-American neighbors, this modestly budgeted drama of sexual mores and real-estate values takes its title and structure from the elaborate coming-of-age

ceremony celebrated today in Los Angeles, and elsewhere, by 15-year-old girls.

A quasi-documentary enactment of such a ceremony begins the film, bringing to an Iglesia de Diós much infectious youthful cheer, a Hummer stretch limo and the triumphal march from *Aída*. To establish what's being celebrated, the filmmakers take care to include a close-up of the honoree's bursting pink bouquet, clutched innocently before her crotch. This is the *quinceañera* of Eileen, who fulfills her role in Echo Park society with a happy effortlessness. Her cousin Magdalena (Emily Rios) doesn't have it that easy. Less moneyed than Eileen, more thoughtful and pious, she will celebrate a markedly different *quinceañera* at the end of the film, having come of age in earnest.

In a semiconfessional gesture to go with their quasi-documentary, the filmmakers have incorporated a fictionalized, satirical portrait of themselves in the guise of a middle-class Anglo couple (David Ross and Jason Wood) who have just bought a house in Echo Park. There goes the neighborhood! And there, into the cruel company of gentrifiers, goes Magdalena's ne'er-do-well cousin Carlos (Jesse Garcia), whose status as a neighborhood outcast parallels her own.

When I tell you that the two sinners find redemption and a new elective home with their old uncle Tomás (played by Peckinpah veteran Chalo Gonzalez), you will not be surprised—but neither will you be disappointed at how the story of *Quinceañera* plays out. That's the great thing about familiar tales. Paint on the local color, and they become a fresh pleasure.

Intimate, nuanced, complex and devastating, Laura Poitras's documentary *My Country, My Country* brings you into the life of one Dr. Riyadh, a plump and gray-mustached physician in Baghdad. You see him at home, which is lit as often as not by kerosene lamps and shaken by nearby explosions. You watch him as he gently cares for the ill, the indigent and the anxiety-ridden in his clinic in the Adhmiya district. You observe him at Abu Ghraib prison, collecting medical information on the prisoners crowded behind a chain-link fence. Most telling of all, you follow him from July 2004 through January 2005, as he stands for election in Iraq's Transitional National Assembly.

Should his fellow Sunnis go to the polls? At a meeting of his faction, the Iraqi Islamic Party, Riyadh argues that they must. To boycott the election, he says, is to condemn themselves to powerlessness. But given the pressures of American occupation, it isn't clear at the outset of the film

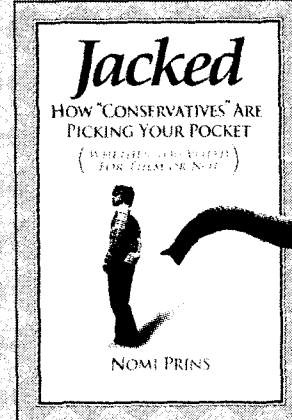
whether Riyadh himself will vote. You wait until the closing scenes to discover what he will do, in a situation that bitterly divides him not only from his Shiite and Kurdish countrymen but from his Sunni community and (worst of all) his wife.

My Country, My Country screened earlier this year in New Directors/New Films, a series that by nature puts the stamp of art on its selections. The merit is deserved: Witness the film's continual sense of discovery, its endless unfolding of emotional complications and Poitras's near-miraculous conjuring of a whole story out of six months' chaos. What you see is a remarkable filmmaking achievement—and an indispensable record of one man's war.

Reminiscent sometimes of early Scorsese and sometimes of Tarantino, but never of the Dogme movement's holy idiocy, Nicolas Winding Refn's *Pusher* trilogy is Denmark's finest exploration of the cinema of shaved skulls and tattoos. Having started in 1996 by making an unembarrassed genre picture, Refn went on to expand it into a mini-genre of its own in *Pusher II: With Blood on My Hands* (2004) and *Pusher III: I'm the Angel of Death* (2005). Each of these subsequent films takes a character from the original *Pusher* and develops his story. The movies are therefore all the same: They involve drug deals gone bad in Copenhagen's underworld, where cameras are stylishly handheld, the dialogue loquacious, the sex filthy and the violence extreme. The movies are all different: They introduce you to men from whom you'd flee in real life, then draw you deeply into their varying moral dilemmas.

Frank (Kim Bodnia), the protagonist of *Pusher*, spends a week trying to find love with a "champagne girl" (Laura Drasbaek) and so neglects a potentially fatal debt. Tonny (Mads Mikkelsen) of *Pusher II* is a brain-damaged ex-con, futilely struggling to please his gang-lord father and care for a baby that just might be his own. Milo (Zlatko Buric), the polyglot old-timer of *Pusher III*, only wants to put on a great 25th-birthday party for his daughter—he's doing all the cooking himself!—and stay with his Narcotics Anonymous program, but unfortunately he has to take time out to kill an Albanian business partner and dispose of the remains. Very few women of my acquaintance would sit through these proceedings; a good many of my male friends would prefer to watch *The Band Wagon*. But for any of my movie buddies who care to join me at the *Pusher* trilogy, I'll be happy to stand a drink afterward. We'll need it.

Short Take: The Bridesmaid (*La Demoiselle d'Honneur*) is arguably a slight and



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anecdotal film by Claude Chabrol, but it comes all the same from the old master's hand. Set in a provincial French city, within the circle of a cash-strapped but relentlessly proper family, *The Bridesmaid* concerns the sudden, obsessive love between Philippe (Benoît Magimel), a humorless young plumbing contractor, and sexy but inexplicable Senta (Laura Smet). Had Philippe watched any movies, he would know at once that Senta needs him like the ax needs the turkey. In his ignorance, though, he lets her

draw him down a spiral stair to her lair, in the crumbling cellar of a semi-abandoned mansion, to be wrapped in her hot embrace and alarming confessions. Rather than believe what he's hearing, he chooses to think she's a mythomaniac—as if that would make her OK. But then, the outwardly normal Philippe has been sleeping recently with a piece of garden statuary, so it seems Senta has chosen the right mark. Desire has seldom seemed so abject, or want of imagination so fatal. ■

IN OUR ORBIT

Fierce Convictions

SARAH GOLDSTEIN

Every other week, in the pages of this magazine, Katha Pollitt collects her thoughts in her column, "Subject to Debate." To say that Pollitt's column is a hotbed of feminist polemic is only partly right. Each of her essays is a small marvel of anger leavened with wit. Armed with a sharp tongue and a broad interest in politics and culture, Pollitt is as likely to seriously critique Martha Stewart as she is to hilariously parody John Ashcroft.

Virginity or Death! (what better title to inspire subway conversation?) compiles more than five years of Pollitt's columns, on topics ranging from 9/11 and the "war on terror" to the abortion wars and stem-cell research. Her dissenter's chronicle of the Bush era—the attacks on civil liberties, the slashing of opportunities for the poor, reckless adventures in "nation building" abroad—displays the unique mix of empathy, fury and wit that has made her one of the strongest voices on the left, or anywhere else. As a biweekly column, "Subject to Debate" reminds readers that they are not alone in their rage; as a collection, *Virginity or Death!* is a call to action—and a tremendously entertaining one at that.

Bemoaning the President's two-faced campaign of "secularism and pluralism and women's rights in the Muslim world" while all three are depleted here, Pollitt can't help wondering if in "the liberal hawks' fantasy war, Bush was the love child of Mary Wollstonecraft and Voltaire, striding forth to battle the combined forces of Osama bin Laden and Jacques Derrida." She is especially deft at using biting humor ("in abstinence-only sex ed...you too can have a virgin birth") and her own experience (after 9/11 Pollitt and her teenage daughter ar-

gued over displaying the American flag, for Pollitt a symbol of "jingoism, and vengeance and war") to demonstrate how personal politics really are.

For all her fierce convictions, Pollitt is also bravely introspective about the most divisive issues of the day, like whether the Bush Administration should topple the Taliban, a regime whose "requirements have some of the obsessive particularity of the Nazis." She came out against the invasion but admitted that it wasn't easy to think calmly about how the United States should respond to 9/11 when "you're afraid to fly in an airplane or open your mail."

In today's polarized political climate, it's tempting for us to define one another as red or blue, and to thank whomever we believe in that we live here and not there. But as Pollitt writes in her introduction, "Women may not call themselves feminists when they fight for their rights, and their daughters' rights. But that is what they are. In the same way, conservatives may not call themselves liberals when they protest the Bush Administration's invasions of our privacy in the name of fighting terrorism.... The requirements of real life count for something, no matter what ideology says." It is to these real-life requirements that Pollitt writes. ■

Sarah Goldstein is a former Nation intern.

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PUZZLE NO. 3046

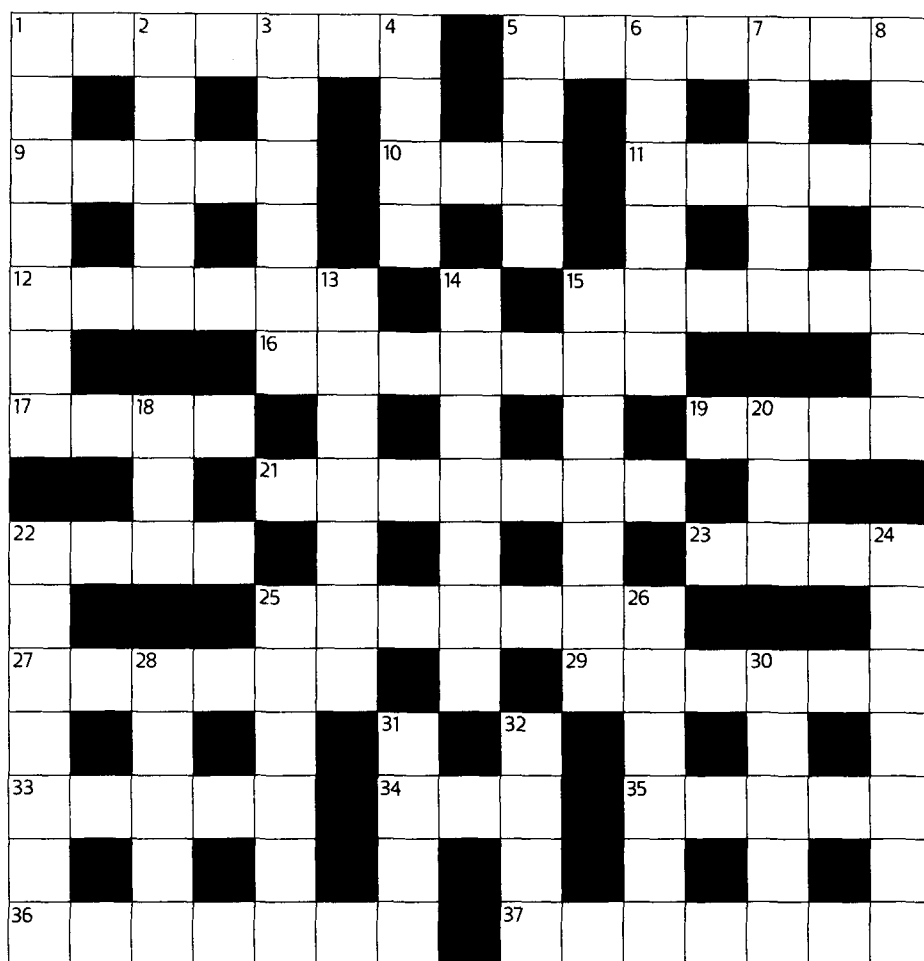
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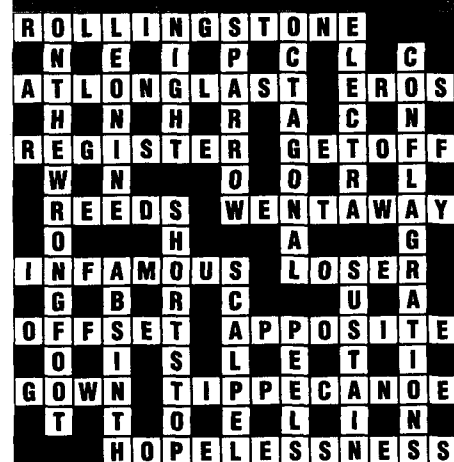
- 1 and 5 More formally, the guy who walked with a cane, which helped him a lot... (7,7)
- 9, 10 and 31 down ...and a good walk does this, as they used to say, and is exceptional. (5,3,4)
- 11 See 17
- 12 Taken by certain religious types and waiters—and those in the ranks. (6)
- 15 Plan that sometimes implies a bit of conniving. (6)
- 16 Sort of subtle point that shows what the strapped tenant sometimes does. (7)
- 17 and 11 Some object, which is very close, is almost an unfortunate experience for the Brits. (4,5)
- 19 See 22
- 21 I strode in peculiar fashion, but their business is breaking news. (7)
- 22 and 19 Not the main chance, but the best dies out of it, perhaps. (4,4)
- 23 and 18 and 30 down Not a very specific location, pointed out in two places. (4,3,5)
- 25 Drink that we don't have in this puzzle but we have it down as a river. (5-2)
- 27 Strange things that happen after dark. (6)
- 29 Describing the shaky condition of Pa's mate, which could be a little sticky. (6)
- 33, 34 and 35 Certainly not a long sucker, which is supposedly a good thing, but brief. (5,3,5)
- 36 Release what used to be an advertisement for dishes at the movies. (3,4)
- 37 Fodder's companions to the ill-spoken, hoping to be first when the going is sloppy. (7)

DOWN

- 1 What George did to the tree in all honesty, admittedly—as the little shaver might have to do. (3,4)
- 2 Posed in one sense, when a desk is toppled. (5)
- 3 Born ones are hopeless, when the villainous roles need direction. (6)
- 4 and 5 Places the hands with the little mechanism like a collar on the shaft. (3-5)
- 6 Can its makeup get used by clowns, as they used to say? (6)
- 7 Look! Madness makes the flower of France! (5)
- 8 What might be fired up obtains bits of gold, possibly. (7)
- 13 Nudes, as posed for those sweet things that sound like the weeks' beginnings (or endings). (7)
- 14 What one might have done with a 15 across, as one did with the garden. (7)
- 15 In total, it's a bird with only part of a body. (7)
- 18 See 23 across
- 20 First Lady—one of those 27, if early. (3)
- 22 Evil has its purposes, possibly—but they might get stuffy. (7)
- 24 Make reference to the wrong sex about it? Stirs you up! (7)
- 25 Treats in the wrong way an old Greek coin. (6)
- 26 You can get spread out with what the sentence sometimes has to be. (6)
- 28 One hasn't this by chance? Impossible—put a thousand on a multitude of it! (5)
- 30 See 23 across
- 31 See 9 across
- 32 A water stopper in the garden with 20 down. (4)



SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 3045



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